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MORALITY IN DOCTRINE

BY

WILLIAM BRIGHT, D.D.

CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN

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DECANO MEO DILECTISSIMO

FRANCISCO PAGET

THEOLOGIÆ PASTORALIS OLIM PROFESSORI

ANIMI PASTORALIS NUNQUAM NON EXEMPLARI

PREFACE

THIS volume, it is hoped, may serve in some degree to illustrate a proposition which has happily become a commonplace with Christian writers,—that what we commonly call Christian morality—that is, the specially Christian application of those moral principles which religion, as such, must presuppose—is based upon, and grows out of, Christian belief, explicitly or implicitly held; that *in* the creed of Christendom are stored up all the motive forces and all the regulative principles which are needful for the ordering of Christian conduct. Just forty years ago, this dependence of religious ethics on religious doctrine was affirmed by Frederick Maurice to be observable in the Old Testament. "The theology of the prophets was the ground of all their human morality. Every perception of what man is and what he ought to do must rest upon

some perception of what God is and of what He does. . . . To lay down rules how a man should govern himself and others, without declaring how God governs, was in their minds a vanity, nay, an impossibility."[1] Since the time at which this was written, the same thought has been repeatedly—it could not be too often or too emphatically—applied to the relation between the Christian creed and the Christian life. It may, perhaps, be not inopportune to bring together some passages, more or less recent in date. "It is precisely this belief in the Divinity of our Lord which has enriched human life with moral virtues such as civilised paganism could scarcely have appreciated, and which it certainly

[1] Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament, p. 437; cp. ib. p. 337. The dependence of the idea of "the infinite nature of duty" on the belief in a "supreme Righteousness" is emphasized in the Quarterly Review for January, 1891, art. 3. Practically, the question of a non-theistic morality is the question whether the passions, in the case of an average man, can be effectually restrained by calculations of ultimate self-interest, or of what is due to the future of humanity,—whether, in the moment of trial, such bonds will not fare like the "seven green withs."

could not have created."[1] "Christian faith, even when regarded without reference to some of its supernatural and most characteristic powers, contains *within* itself all the good influences which sceptical culture offers, but it supplies a cardinal necessity in which they are deficient."[2] "Vain is the dream of a Christian morality without a true Christian theology supporting and inspiring it from beneath.[3] "The Christian type" of morality "is the product and property of the Christian scheme" of doctrine. . . . "From the history of all that has lain within the reach of the great Mediterranean basin, not a tittle of encouragement can be drawn for the ideas of those who would surrender the

[1] Liddon, Bamp. Lect. p. 496. He illustrates this by the consideration of purity, humility, and charity.

[2] Wace, Bamp. Lect. p. 241. The allusion in the last words is to the efficacy of "the Divine Ideal in the Person of Christ" for the elevation of individuals to a high standard.

[3] Principal Shairp, Studies in Poetry and Philosophy, p. 386. So in p. 381; "Only in vital Christianity, or rather, to speak plainly, in God revealed in Christ, lies the adequate and all-sufficient moral motive-power for man."

doctrines of Christianity, and yet retain its moral and spiritual fruits."[1] "To expect to maintain the moral level of Christianity after you have exploded Christianity . . . may be a magnificent and imposing audacity, but it does not reckon with human nature, . . . with its passion, with its selfishness, with its shrewdness; and as little with what it has learned and knows of the heights to which it may be raised."[2] The proposal to "get the perfect Christian morality without Christian theology" is like proposing to "get motion without supplying the force which is its spring."[3] "Christian morals are rooted in the central mystery of our relation to God in Christ, and God's relation to us in Him; and we must believe in some of the characteristic doctrines of Christ before we can discover the possibility of obeying His commandments."[4] "The

[1] Mr. Gladstone, Nineteenth Century, May, 1888.

[2] Dean Church, in a Cambridge University sermon, printed in the Guardian of Nov. 15, 1882.

[3] Spectator of May 29, 1886. It is added that Christian morality has always had faith for its "constitutive force."

[4] R. W. Dale, Laws of Christ for Common Life, p. 215. Again, "The Christian doctrine of man is implicated in

practical agreement which now prevails among Christians as to morals is due largely to centuries of agreement as to theology, which have ingrained Christian morals into the very fibres of the nature of those who now reject the Christian theology."[1] "The Christian morals of a people would be sure to survive for some time the ruin of their faith: but they would not survive very long;" they would "gradually, but as certainly, expire, as a piece of coal taken out of the fire and left alone with its borrowed heat."[2] "From the first, Christian ethics has been based on Christian theology. . . . The claim of Christianity is, that while it sets before man a new and higher ideal in the life of Him in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead, it gives a

the Christian doctrine of God, or, to speak more exactly, in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; and the Christian doctrine of man determines the Christian theory of morals and the Christian theory of society;" Dale, Fellowship with Christ, p. 158.

[1] "Christianity without Creed; can that be permanent?" S.P.C.K.

[2] MacColl, Christianity in Relation to Science and Morals, p. 301.

new moral dynamic to enable him to realise it."[1] These last words commend themselves with a pathetic interest to those who know how much both Oxford and the Church of England lost by the early removal of Aubrey Moore.

If there is still in many quarters, where Christian morality is respected or cherished, a notion, more or less indistinct, as to the possibility of detaching it from its historical root of belief, and still keeping it fresh and powerful, this may be largely due to the invidious associations which have been sedulously fastened upon such terms as "dogma," "formulas," "theological metaphysics," etc. It is assumed that "creeds" are, as such, factitious accretions on the original "simple Christian idea," and that they have nothing to do with life or character, — that, in fact, their effect on both is narrowing and

[1] A. L. Moore, Essays Scientific and Philosophical, pp. 111, 132. In the same essay he intimates a conviction "that there is no basis for the Christian virtues except the Christian verities,"—a phrase which occurs also in his "Message of the Gospel," p. 114.

impoverishing. And yet the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, to which the statements in the Catholic Creeds may be reduced, are inextricably bound up with the interests, not of speculation, but of moral and spiritual life, as related to the profession of Christianity,—let us say rather, to the confession of Christ as Lord.[1] Union with Christ is, according to New Testament teaching, the secret, the spring, the vital force of practical Christian attainment; and "a Christ not Divine is one other than the Christ on whom the souls of Christians have habitually fed."[2] The Church knows and adores a Christ Divine in His personality,—"our great God and Saviour, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for Himself a

[1] See T. B. Strong's Manual of Theology, p. 188; "The Church doctrine seems . . . to stand in the very strongest contrast to anything which Greek speculation produced. . . . Trinitarianism runs back upon a moral conception of God, whereas the Hellenic interest is predominantly metaphysical." Cp. Wace's Bamp. Lect. p. 158, on this moral bearing of the Creeds.

[2] Gladstone, *ubi supr.*

people of His own, earnest in good works,"[1]— the "Eternal Life that was manifested to take away our sins." It is the name of this Christ which represents the principal link between the doctrinal and moral elements of His religion. They are one in Him: to separate them is to impair, on one side or the other, our relation to Him, to bring in a pernicious dualism where He has established a life-giving unity. But two other symbols of this unity may be found in the words "grace" and "sin." For "grace" reminds us of a whole array of cognate Christian doctrines as to the Sacred Humanity, the Atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, the efficacy of Sacraments rightly used; while it exists simply in order to make men better, to purify not merely the utterance and the act, but also the "first springs of thought and will," to kindle thankfulness, to quicken the sense of responsibility, to render obedience possible, to bring sanctification within reach. And whereas undoctrinal versions of Christianity are usually

[1] Tit. ii. 13, 14. See R.V.

marked by a defective apprehension of the malignity of sin, it is when we seriously look at it in the light of the Passion, as having cost the death of the Son of God, that we perceive most clearly how mischievous are all attempts to "mitigate the verdict of conscience" in regard to such an evil,—how certain they are to "drain the life out of our religion, and to quench all brightness in the things of faith."[1] As the Cross has been called "the measure of sin," it also enables us to estimate aright the remedies which the Christian Faith exhibits, and stimulates us to use them for our healing.[2]

And these three great monosyllables, "Christ," "grace," and "sin," bear witness for the converse truth, that Christian belief has a true depen-

[1] Dean Paget, Faculties and Difficulties for Belief and Disbelief, p. 189.

[2] Pelagianism began with a sincere moral interest: but in the result "it dulled the sense of sin" and "depressed the standard of virtue." By explaining away grace, it took away that higher conception of virtue, as in a true sense "inspired," without which morality sinks down to a "social and secular level." Mozley, August. Doctr. of Predestination, p. 105.

dence on Christian action. Truth is meant to "sanctify," faith to "purify,"[1] doctrine to "assist the acts of worship and obedience:"[2] but what if these purposes are hindered? A belief which is not allowed to tell upon life, which is merely entertained by the intellect, and not embraced by the affections and the will, is bound to lose its power *as* a belief: or, to combine the phrases of two Apostles, in so far as it fails to "operate," it is practically deadened.[3] It fares, in the end, like a pious emotion that is not utilised by obedience.[4] It loses its own clearness and force, because it is not brought into contact with what is most really and profoundly the believing person's own self, his affections and his will: it has not "passed into his system," and so it becomes, for him, less and less of a reality. "We can only retain a hold on religious truth by acting on it. . . . Every religious truth believed, but not acted on, is in a fair way to be forgotten. We make religious truths

[1] John xvii. 17; Acts xv. 9.
[2] Newman, Arians, p. 150. [3] Gal. v. 6; James ii. 17.
[4] Newman's Sermons, i. 118 ff.

really our own, and mount by and through them to higher truths beyond, by staking a venture upon them."[1] This is connected with the necessity of moral predispositions and aspirations in order to a due appreciation of Christianity as a religion; and with the observed fact that when a person strives, if only during one day, to keep clear of sin, to correspond with grace, and to do what Christ would have him to do, his perception of the Christian *credenda* becomes proportionably more vivid and intimate: his "Credo" is realised by his efforts to live up to it, and increasingly verified by the experience which such efforts tend to supply.

"You cannot conceive of Christianity," says Dean Church, "except as a moral religion, requiring, inspiring morality;" but he had already pointed out that the moral enthusiasm, the fire of zeal for "righteousness and love and purity," which characterized the early Christians, was kindled by the belief that "Divine and unearthly Goodness had appeared

[1] Liddon, Sermons on Some Words of Christ, p. 321.

among men in real human form;" that its "visitation and presence had altered the possibilities of human nature," and inaugurated "a second springtide of the world by bringing into society a morality which was serious and powerful, a morality which would wear and last, . . . which could go back to its sacred springs, and repair its fire and its strength."[1] Wherever it has done so, the "repair" has been effected by a quickening of personal faith in Christ, of personal devotion to Christ; and that faith and devotion, in their turn, have been sustained by a growing energy in Christian moral progress, in steady advance towards "the prize of the high calling."

Most of the following sermons have been addressed, in substance, to parochial congregations. The last but one was preached at the Cuddesdon College Festival on May 26, 1891, and published, by request, soon afterwards.

CHRIST CHURCH,
Michaelmas, 1892.

[1] Church, The Gifts of Civilisation, etc., p. 190, 184–186.

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SERMON I.

SANCTIFICATION THROUGH THE TRUTH.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth."—
St. John xvii. 17.

These words form part of that prayer of "high-priestly" intercession which our Lord offered up when the hour of His Passion was at hand. By words never to be forgotten, by acts of tender and solemn import, He had shown the disciples who belonged to Him so closely that, while "about to depart out of this world unto the Father, He loved them to the uttermost," with a love that partook of His own perfection; He had washed their feet by way of emphasizing His new commandment; He had instituted the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and had drawn out its significance in that beautiful allegory which was to indicate His own life-giving Headship, and their incorporation into Him; He had summed up a prolonged and intensely affectionate farewell by

warning them that "in the world they would have tribulation,"—by bidding them at the same time to be of good cheer, because He had overcome the world, and in Him they should have peace, the appropriate fruit of such a victory. And then—"these words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes unto heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee."

Christian writers have laboured to express, or at least to intimate, their sense of the depth and majesty, the mysterious calm, the indescribable, all-comprehending tenderness, of the words which thus begin. "Words," says one, "which none but the Only-begotten could ever utter, His own final testimony to Himself."[1] Another affirms that "were He *not* God, the whole prayer, glistening as it does with features that presuppose His Divine dignity, would be nothing but a sacrilegious parody."[2] A third speaks of it as "the prayer of One on whom the full glory of heaven has descended,"[3]—let us rather say, who lives in it, and reflects it. A fourth warns us that we can no more penetrate into all its fulness "than we can gaze on the unapproachable

[1] Stier, Words of the Lord Jesus, Eng. Tr., vi. 422.
[2] Nicolas, Études sur le Christianisme, iv. 70.
[3] Dale, The Atonement, p. 56.

and true light."[1] It has been fitly called "the Holy of Holies of the Gospel history;" and we, on this doubly sacred evening,[2] may do well to spend a short time within this "innermost sanctuary"[3] of our Incarnate Saviour's presence. For an Ordination, to those who seriously recognise Him as the true though invisible Agent in all the great ordinances of His Kingdom, recalls the deepening intimacies, the yearning anxieties, the pathetic forbearances, of His protracted intercourse with the chosen ones whom He was training to be the first holders of a Ministry that should last till His return. And at the close of another Trinity Sunday, our thoughts of Him inevitably mount up from the scenes of His self-humiliation to the glory which, as He Himself in this very prayer affirms, He had in close proximity to the Father, before the world was; from which He had so far stooped as to accept the "limitations" of a sinless human existence, and to which, while yet under those limitations, He asks, in effect, to be restored when the condescension shall have had its perfect work, when the hour of exaltation shall have

[1] Williams, The Holy Week, p. 504.

[2] Preached in Lincoln Cathedral on Trinity Sunday evening, June 1, 1890, before the newly-ordained.

[3] Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus, ii. 527.

come. Although in the Godhead He is equal to the Father, for Godhead can admit of no degrees, yet even in this Divine sphere of existence, He, as Son, is dependent on the Father as the eternal Fountain and Origin of Godhead; even as on this day we profess to "worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty,"—that is, to acknowledge that the Being to whom we ascribe that majesty is essentially the One and only God.

It has truly been said that, "when He prayed to the Father, it was not the prayer of *a* man supplicating God,"—that is, of a mere man, of one human in his personality, "but of the Eternal Son, who had ever shared the glory of the Father, addressing Him as before, but in a new way, in the economy of redemption, and through the feelings and thoughts of human nature."[1] But then, observe, they were feelings and thoughts which, in becoming man, He had actually appropriated. His prayers were not like the acting of a scene gone through, so to speak, for our instruction (as an ill-directed reverence once imagined), and representing no true aspiration of His own soul: they were rather the genuine expressions of a deeply consolatory fact, that in His manhood He was ever looking to and

[1] Newman, Sermons, vi. 62.

leaning upon His Father, working the works of the Father who sent Him, finding His sustenance in the doing of His Father's will. As man, He needed the help, strength, comfort, which His Father could give Him; and so in this prayer, while He indicates the majesty of His own Personality, and speaks, quite simply and naturally, of Himself in terms which would be too august for an archangel, He is yet really asking, as Son of man, for things which, as Son of man, He desires with His whole heart.

Yes, it is the sacred heart of the Lord Jesus which is laid bare to us in this seventeenth chapter of St. John. That little band of loyal souls around Him,—the men whom the Father had given Him out of the world, to whom He had manifested the name of the Father—that is, the Father Himself, as far as He could be known,—who had tried, at any rate, to understand His meaning, although that very evening had shown how little some of them had entered into it,—who, at any rate, were quite sure that He had come from the Father,—who had kept the Father's word as far as they had got hold of it,—they were now to be left without Him in the world. What would become of them? They would have to live in the midst of that manifold human society whose habits, traditions, opinions, points of view, ruling passions, dominant

aims, were opposed to the supremacy of the all-good and holy Will. "I ask not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." No, their work would lie in the world; they must prepare to be agents of the Spirit in "convicting" it as wrong on points of gravest moment, to testify in the face of its repugnance for the claims of the true Master, to suffer patiently, when the time should come, whatever its hostility could inflict. They must be in it; only let them not be of it. What, then, shall keep them from the infection of its influence? A process, a power, of sanctification, or, rather, of consecration.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word, the word that is Thine, is truth." What He says a little further on affixes to the phrase here used this sense of consecration, dedication, single-hearted self-devotion: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." Here He is evidently alluding to His own self-offering: He is saying, in effect, "I now, in free purpose of soul, give Myself to die for them, and for all others who will accept the salvation thus procured." He is, as it were, repeating the words with which He had just administered the first Eucharist: "My Body which *is* given for you, My Blood which *is* shed for many." And so, although He could not mean to ask

that His Apostles might become, in this sense, sacrifices for the world, He does pray that they may be filled with the true spirit of self-dedication. If they are to be guarded from the evil that is in the world, nothing short of this spirit can give the required security. Let it, therefore, be fully bestowed.

But why, we may ask, does He speak of this consecration as to be effected in or by that word of the Father, which is His truth? Let us consider a little what is meant by the "word," by the "truth," in this way of speaking.

We are often told with emphasis, that no religious doctrine, no assertion about God, or His supposed will, or His nature as said to be revealed to us, can live simply as a piece of abstract dogma, imposed by authority on human credence: "There, you have got to believe that, or it will be the worse for you." The time, it is said, at which this mandate would be listened to is gone, and cannot return. Probably something is added about "hard formulas," and "dry theological propositions;" and we are assured, truly enough, that a theology which is to have a chance of acceptance must correspond with the moral and spiritual needs of man. It must be vitalising, or it is dead and done for. This, at any rate, is most true, and needs to be remembered by all who have to teach

in the name of the Light of the world. "All which is taught," it has been well said, "concerning God, must be in the highest conceivable degree righteous, must be such as to lay hold of and cherish whatever susceptibility of righteousness there is in man, and carry it on to perfection."[1] Let us be thankful that this demand is made. It gives us a splendid opportunity; it opens to us a great and effectual door. We can answer by striving to show that although, indeed, the mere intellectual reception of a doctrine would not in itself sanctify or consecrate the soul of the receiver,—although he might believe it, and yet his belief might be dead, being alone,—yet, when Christian truth is received as Jesus Christ intends it to be received, by the act of the whole inner man, then the case is very different. The thoughts of our day are strongly turned towards the relations which exist between this and that fact or class of facts; people's minds are full of the ideas of unity, of solidarity, of harmonious interdependence, of the various aspects belonging to every single truth, of truths as forming a great family. It is well. Be it for us, then, to point out that when the Christian creed is really assimilated, in all its bearings on the mind, the will, and the heart, it tells effectively on the character, it

[1] Principal Shairp, Studies in Poetry and Philosophy, p. 396.

becomes not only a word, but a power; it is spirit and it is life: it is the presence, in fact, of "a living, omnipotent, heavenly Form," of that Divine personal Truth who is also the Way and the Life, who "informs and fashions all minds that love Him,"[1] and moulds them into conformity with Himself. See this illustrated by the exhortations as to conduct which appear in St. Paul's writings as so many inferences from doctrine; see it, above all, epitomized in the sacred prayer of the text, "Consecrate them by the agency of"—literally, "in the atmosphere of"—Thy truth, which is "Thy word."[2] Jesus assumed our whole being, for He willed to redeem it wholly; He took hold of life on all its sides: and therefore, consistently, He gave us a Gospel which, if properly dealt with, is operative for our moral restoration,—a faith which, if we give it fair play, can supply motives of strongest power for the practical sanctification of those whose belief is active through love. "In St. Paul," it has been said, "the moral element interpenetrates doctrine, and rises spontaneously out of it."[3] It is true that when persons ask us to "let them have the morality of the Gospel without its mysterious

[1] Mozley, Essays, ii. 147. [2] Westcott *in loc.*

[3] Liddon, University Sermons, i. 256. So in his sermon on "The Secret of Clerical Power," "Each revealed dogma became a germ of moral power;" and see his Bampton Lectures, p. 284, ff.

doctrines," we may ask them what fruit will grow on a tree that has been uprooted; but it is better to help them to see something of the moral fertility of Christian doctrine in detail, and then ask them whether they would wish to dispense with it. They are right in demanding what will help them to become better; we may, perhaps, succeed in convincing them that such help comes best, after all, from the revelation which centres in the Incarnate; that "whatever" the Faith "teaches concerning the work and the Person of our Lord," and the other spiritual facts dependent on them, "it teaches, not in the abstract, but as holding forth Him whose steps we are to follow, in whom our whole trust is to be reposed, with whom we are to be vitally incorporated, and whom, accordingly, we must needs know, even though in a glass darkly," [1] as He has revealed Himself, and not otherwise.

For instance, let us look at the fundamental doctrine which we contemplate with adoring faith on Trinity Sunday. Is this a mere matter of metaphysical speculation? Has it no power of consecration for our lives? It saves us from an impoverished conception of the character of God, for it shows that He did not begin to be "Love" when

[1] Gladstone, Gleanings, ii. 32.

He willed to create beings whom He could care for; that in the eternal union of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there was an unspeakable fulness of moral life, in all the perfection of holy love. It gives a basis and a warrant to the Christian's unreserved loyalty of soul towards Christ as his Master and Redeemer. It shows, as has been well said, why Christ's life is a revelation of God to the human conscience,[1] and why His boundless "self-assertion" is consistent with the perfection of His moral example. Again, when we are told that the Second Person of the Trinity became Man for our sakes, or that the Third Person is really the inspirer of all holy desires and the source of all just works, are we not thereby taught that such intimate nearness of the Very God to our humanity ensures for human souls an indefinite possibility of improvement, of advance in all that really makes the man? Does not the sympathy of our Incarnate Saviour,—of Him who, before He died for us, had worked in a carpenter's shop, had blessed little children, had wept over a friend's grave, had let a friend lean on His bosom,—open heart to heart among those who call themselves His servants, and sweeten and ennoble life by laying stress on the oneness of humanity? Does not His

[1] Wace, Christianity and Morality, p. 281, ff.

love "constrain" us, and appeal to us, as nothing else can, to make some better use, for His sake, of the life which is sanctified by His holy Incarnation?

Or, to take only one more case, does not the Christian teaching as to grace, the conditions under which and the means by which it operates, remind us most helpfully of our dependence on the Fountain of all good,—warn us, at the same time, of our responsibility for the right use of the gift which, if we choose, we can ignore,—and furnish at once a safeguard against self-exaltation, and a cure for moods of despondency? That grace, as a movement of the Holy Ghost, operative on the will and the affections, is necessary both as "prevenient" and as "furthering," and yet is in no case irresistible; that it makes the right choice possible, but does not determine it so as to annul responsibility; that its ordinary Sacramental channels, in themselves so incapable of touching our spiritual life, are for that very reason effective as witnesses for the life-giving power that acts through them;—these, surely, are considerations alike humbling and inspiriting, which tend to keep the soul in a right posture before its God. In many other such ways, the truth, when really taken home and appropriated, can and will be, as history has repeatedly proved, a principle of vital

sanctification; it will help us to live, as St. Paul words it, summarising the whole Christian life by the use of a single preposition,—to live "in the Lord," "in Christ."

One word more to you, my brethren, who have this day become, in new ways and especially, trustees of this word of the Father, with all its wonderful potencies, this Gospel which is, as truly now as ever, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." What should be your resolution at the close of this Ordination Sunday? Surely this,—that you will place yourselves more and more, day by day, within the consecrating influences of that truth which is committed to your keeping, as ministers of Him that is true. Be this your constant prayer,—"O righteous Father, sanctify me through Thy truth. Let it be to me what it has been to such thousands of Thy ministers in all ages, who have escaped the plague of unreality and the condemnation of the teacher who teaches not himself. Behold, I give myself to Thee, from this day forward, without reserve, to all lengths, simply, totally, loyally: do Thou give me that full belief in Thy truth, which will be rooted in love, and fruitful in self-dedication."

Most wonderful, indeed, is the Divine generosity: we have wasted time, neglected opportunities, been

deaf to calls and unresponsive to grace; yet the Lord, who forgets nothing, "comes and stands, and calls us as at other times," that we may answer, "Thy servant heareth: behold, I am here, Lord." He meets us with the offer of higher places in His household. He would stir us, by honest shame for the past, to a truer fidelity in the future,—would draw us to a penitent and practical devotion as with "cords of a man, with bands of love,"[1] by a fresh exhibition of such Divine trustfulness as must surely evoke a resolution not to disappoint it. Let us, who are pledged to His more immediate service, study to "show ourselves dutiful and thankful" to Him for the privilege of being His own appointed agents; and let all alike, clergy and people, pray heartily that the truth of God may do its gracious work upon us, remembering that they only who know it as the truth which consecrates will know it as the truth which can make free.[2]

[1] Hosea xi. 4. [2] John viii. 32.

SERMON II.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY BASED UPON CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith."—St. Jude 20.

There is no little significance in the fact that whereas, in the Roman "use," the Sundays of the second half of the Christian year are reckoned as "after Pentecost," they have in England by general custom for many ages been reckoned as "after Trinity."[1] It seems that in England, earlier than elsewhere, the festival which by degrees was developed out of the octave of Pentecost acquired the distinctive name of Trinity Sunday; and its position in our own ritual, as a conspicuous landmark which gives a name to a whole unbroken ecclesiastical season, may witness to us for the practical momentousness of the great doctrine that God, the One God, exists in a real Trinity,—and generally of the

[1] Sarum. In York and Hereford uses they were reckoned as "after the octave of Pentecost."

whole body of Christian doctrine in regard to the ordering of Christian life. What is it, on the whole, which occupies the foreground of the Church's devotional thought, as she passes through this lengthy period? Its first Sunday collect may serve as a sample of others, may enable us to answer the question: the subject thus prominent is the formation of Christian character, so as to please God, through Christ, both in will and deed. After having considered in detail the several facts in the great process which began with our Lord's birth, and ended with the sending of the Holy Spirit as a first result of His Ascension, we are bidden to prostrate ourselves in thought before the "most ancient of all mysteries," as underlying them all, and yet illuminating them all. And then, perhaps for nearly thirty weeks, the question is urged upon us in a great variety of forms, What have these truths, in which you believe, to do with your daily conduct? How far are you the better, how far can you become the better, for believing them? In what respects is your creed morally fruitful? What is its value as bearing on your life?

Not a few would attempt to dispose very summarily of such questions. "Give up," they would say, "the dream of getting any practical help from

the acceptance of so much abstract doctrine. Christianity is simply moral in its essence; and morality can owe nothing to theology, or rather, theology has usurped, too long, the place in human interest which belongs to morality alone. Doctrines are dry forms, mere husks, or, at best, the frame that once held the picture, the box which once secured the jewels; but such use as then belonged to them is over; throw them away, if you want to get at spirit and life; you will find all you can really need in the ethical portions of the gospels—say, in the Sermon on the Mount. What is not contained or implied in it is not of the substance of Christianity; and that is the case as to a mass of doctrinal statements which the Churches, or at least their official rulers, going astray on a wrong track, have invested with a conventional sanctity."

The first thing that strikes one as to this way of speaking is, that it very quietly makes at least two very large assumptions. For one thing, if it means that theology as such has nothing to do with conduct, that doctrine is not to the purpose when ethics are in question, it overlooks the fact that if you take away the belief in an Infinite Moral Being, a living personal God, who has taken men as moral beings into relations with Himself, you will have to

base duty on what is less than infinite, on large calculations of expediency, personal or social; and such a basis will, in the hour of moral stress, be like "a wall daubed with untempered mortar," it will not stand the shock of appetite or self-will; but then, if you retain this belief, you will find that it is essentially theological, it involves a doctrine of the most momentous character; not to say that the distinctively Christian doctrines have been most effective as helps to moral self-control and as incentives to self-sacrificing charity. For another thing, this disparagement of "theology" in the supposed interest of Christian practice takes for granted that all the expressly doctrinal parts of the Christian Scriptures, and all those sayings ascribed to Jesus Christ which affirm His own superhuman majesty, or His mysterious relation to the Father, in terms going beyond those which the Sermon employs, are simply spurious. For if they are not spurious, what right have we to say that they may be set aside as not essentially parts of authentic Christianity? But, to look into the sermon itself; who can read it, and not see that it presupposes, as true, some very great doctrines; that the motives for good conduct which it would call into action are derived from belief in God, in His character, in His providence, in His in-

timate relation to His responsible creatures, in His observant presence as Father, Sovereign, Judge; and, further, that the Speaker Himself asserts His own supreme jurisdiction over souls and consciences, as competent to correct not merely Pharisaic traditions, but "the express verbal statements of the old Law"?[1] "It was said to them of old time—but *I* say unto you." The principle that there are truths about God which He has revealed, which man can know with a knowledge real though imperfect, and which are of the very utmost importance for him to apprehend and to act upon, meets us at the very outset, and goes with us to the very end of the discourse which astonished its hearers as contrasting so magnificently, in its absolute certainty of tone, with the discussions and arguments of the various schools of "scribes." In other words, this sermon has a theological element running all through it:[2] nor could it be otherwise, if Christ was the perfect Teacher of men, enforcing a religious morality; for religion obliges us to look at the questions, "What do I think of God," and "How do I stand related to Him?" There may be things called

[1] Döllinger, First Age of the Church, Eng. Tr., p. 24.

[2] It has even been said that "it is the theology, rather than the morality, of the Sermon on the Mount which constitutes its main characteristic, and its supreme motive power."—Wace, Some Central Points of Our Lord's Ministry, p. 242.

by the name of religion which put these questions on one side, or which come short of confessing a moral Deity in relation with man as a moral being, One who has a personality not less but more excellent than our own, in whom will and character attain their highest perfection, who is, in the grand Bible phrase, a living God. But religion, properly so called, must confess Him; and "the word God," thus definitely brought in, brings with it a theology, or rather "*is* a theology in itself."[1] You cannot say, "I believe that God is, that He is righteous and merciful, that I am responsible to Him for my conduct," without, in effect, affirming theological propositions of the gravest possible moment. And we cannot take stock, intellectually, of these primary convictions, without framing doctrinal formulas, whether simpler or more complex; it is a mere law of the human mind, from which there is no escape. It is but to say the same in other words with regard to Him who is the special object of Christian belief, that to take Christ for our Lord and Master, and yet shirk the primary question, "Who and what is Christ, and on what are His claims grounded?" is a proceeding so inconsistent as to be, on the face of it, irrational.

The ethics of Christianity are thus in close con-

[1] Newman, The Idea of a University, p. 26.

nection with its doctrines; the Christian's character is to be built up, as St. Jude tells us, on the strong foundation of the Christian's most holy faith. "Christianity purports to be not a system of moral teaching only, but a system of revealed facts which centre in our Lord, and on which moral teaching is to rest."[1] Try to make out a scheme of "practical Christianity" detached from the Christian creed, and you are attempting a hopeless task; if you tear away the "dogmas," the precepts lose their sanctions and motive power. A writer of eminence, who stands apart from Christian "orthodoxy," and thinks that there is a want of "masculine" breadth in the current moral teaching of "the Churches," yet declines to hold "any Church dogma responsible for this insufficiency," predicts that it would take centuries to establish any morality on a non-Christian basis, and affirms that the ethical teaching of the present day, to be influential, ought to grow out of Christianity.[2] Truly it ought, for Christianity is a life as much as a creed, a life which, "in virtue of its distinctive doctrine, is nurtured to a richer goodness than all other religious life."[3] What is the animating principle

[1] Cp. Gladstone, Gleanings, vii. 184.
[2] Fortnightly Review, vol. li. p. 513.
[3] Dr. H. Allon, in Good Words for 1889, p. 643.

of a life that is truly and effectively Christian? It is faith in the living Christ as a personal Saviour, Divine and human, who is not only the example to be imitated, but the very source of that moral power and that spiritual life which are to make imitation possible. It is the Christ of St. Paul and St. John, the Christ of the Catholic creeds, who has been the true Author of all that purity, tenderness, devotedness, which have made Christian morality a new thing in the world. It was so from the very first: observe how St. Paul, after stating some high mysterious doctrine, uses it as a motive for fresh moral effort; because God has thus revealed Himself, "therefore" let us "present our bodies a living sacrifice," "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," and "walk worthily of the calling wherewith we were called,"[1]—that is, let our belief be a stimulus to devout and faithful action—a stimulus, as a great writer has expressed it,[2] "which lies in the vision of another world, and the hope which such a revelation kindles;" which lies, let us add, in the impulse that, as a mere matter of history, has been found in "the Image or Idea of Christ, imprinted in the minds of His subjects," in the "central Thought of

[1] Rom. xii. 1; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. iv. 1.
[2] Mozley, University Sermons, p. 330.

an Invisible Lord," the object of a "sovereign devotion,"[1] an affectionate all-absorbing loyalty, which has enabled them to do what otherwise they would have found impracticable,[2] and which they have learned to refer to His mysterious indwelling as their "life." Even the sins of Christians, sins often done as in His cause, bear Him witness; for His character condemns them absolutely, and had His spirit been duly appreciated, they would not, they could not, have been committed. In a word, throughout the Christian ages, the "inspiration" of all truly Christian conduct has been from Christ as revealed through Christian doctrine. If many have held that doctrine without acting upon it, they have never really understood it, or done it justice; if many who now reject it lead lives which are noble or self-denying, they are yet self-hindered from attaining to that crown of moral attainment which Christians call holiness; and, as a living Bishop has said, "spirituality" and religious vitality have been found most fully

[1] Newman, Grammar of Assent, pp. 458–460.

[2] "He came to strengthen what is good,
Yet here grows weak and dies:
The life we cannot lead, yet would,
He came to realise;
To wash it in atoning blood,
And crown it in the skies."
Aubrey de Vere, The Waldenses, etc., p. 107.

present where "the certitudes of doctrinal truth" have had most power.[1] But let us take to heart the practical scope of such "power." It is most true that, for instance, sin is seen to be exceeding sinful when regarded as in antagonism to the Divine sanctity and the Divine love, as the Gospel alone enables us to appreciate them; and that the Passion and the Resurrection have supplied remedies for its pollution and its misery, such as those who knew not Christ could never conceive. But it is not less true that no one can believe effectively in the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit, the Church and the Sacraments, who does not feel his own need of the grace that flows from or through them; and no one can take home, in any vital sense, the doctrine of the Atonement, who does not earnestly desire to be delivered from his sin, to find in the death of Christ its "double cure."

Here, then, is a lesson for us through Trinity-time; to build up our interior life on the basis of our most holy faith, to translate our creed practically into conduct. We are so familiar with the word "edification" that we often forget its real meaning; let

[1] Bishop Ellicott, Salutary Doctrine, p. 15. "If," he adds, "we are to have vitality in religion, we must set forth the Incarnation," with all those results of it "which form the substance of the Creeds."

us use the term which brings that meaning out. What says St. Paul, whose eyes in his travels had rested on so many noble structures? "Let every one please his neighbour for what is good, so as to build him up." "Knowledge puffeth up, charity buildeth up." "All things are lawful, but all things do not build up." "He that prophesieth buildeth up the Church; seek that ye may abound" in spiritual gifts "unto the building-up of the Church." "All things, beloved, for your building-up." "The authority which the Lord gave me for building up." "Exhort each other, and build each other up."[1] But, as the Apostle of grace, he reminds us that the building process, in the spiritual order, is due to the joint action of the Divine will as originating, and the human will as responding. Thus he describes Christians as "having been" already built up, that is, in baptism, and also as in the way of "being built up," in progressive Christian practice, and again he commends the Ephesian elders to that word of God's grace which is able to build them up;[2] the work is in a true sense God's; He begins it, He alone can supply the force needful for its continuance and completion,

[1] Rom. xv. 2; 1 Cor. viii. 1; x. 23; xiv. 4, 12; 2 Cor. xii. 19; xiii. 10; 1 Thess. v. 11.

[2] Eph. ii. 20, 22; Col. ii. 7; Acts xx. 32.

although He expects us to use that force, and so to co-operate with Him, and in Him to "work out our salvation," to make "our election sure." And yet another point is suggested by this imagery. The building process is gradual; stone is added to stone, the fabric rises by degrees, it "grows," as St. Paul once describes it,[1] even as, in our Lord's parable, the earth is described as bringing forth in due order "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."[2] Let us beware of short cuts which will prove to be the longest way round; the question put by revivalists, "Are you saved?" ignores the teaching of Scriptural symbolism. For us the question is, "Am I *being* saved?[3] Is the process of salvation going on within me? Am I advancing with due regularity of onward, upward movement, going on steadily, step by step, 'from faith to faith,' 'from strength to strength,' 'supplying,' as St. Peter expresses it, 'moral vigour in addition to and in union with faith,' and dealing similarly by knowledge, and self-control, and patience, and godliness, and brotherly kindness, and comprehensive charity?"[4] This should be our programme; let us try to carry it out. It will require much care, and not a little patience; we must not be

[1] Eph. ii. 21. [2] Mark iv. 28.
[3] Cp. Acts ii. 47; 1 Cor. xv. 2. [4] 2 Pet. i. 5.

disheartened under checks, nor grow weary in well-doing; the fabric must be carried up, stage after stage, with an unswerving aim, with patient repeated efforts, with a humble reliance on Him who takes an individualising [1] interest in its progress, as He noted the tokens of improvement at Thyatira.[2] To Him let us commend our "building," and pray that, at last, it may be accepted as complete, when perseverance, consolidated by grace, shall have fixed the coping-stone.

[1] Christian Year, Monday before Easter.
[2] Rev. ii. 19.

SERMON III.

CHRIST COMING BY WATER AND BLOOD.

"This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."—1 JOHN v. 6.

WE have, perhaps, more than once observed that all the chief anniversaries of the Christian year, with the one exception of the Ascension festival, take their Gospels, in our Prayer Book, from St. John. It is well that this should be so; that, for instance, when we contemplate the condescensions of the Holy Nativity,—when in our "Paschal joy" we celebrate the victory of Him who died and who liveth,—when we commemorate the fulfilment of His promise to send "another Comforter," in whose coming He Himself would revisit His faithful ones,—and, yet again, when we try to contemplate the eternal life of the One God as existing in Trinity,—we should drink in the spirit of the great theological Gospel, should listen to the teaching of that disciple who had learned

so much when leaning on the heart of the Lord, and of whom, as teacher in Ephesus, and as prophet in Patmos, a Christian poet of elder days could sing—

> "Lo, he soars up high and higher,
> Ne'er to inmost Heaven came nigher
> Seer's or prophet's rapture-flight:
> Ne'er so much, through God's revealing,
> Of His past and future dealing
> Pure soul saw in purer light."[1]

So it is that on that day which we call pre-eminently "good," although pre-eminently awful, we read the Passion according to that Apostle who, alone of the Twelve, stood with Mary by the Cross; and we contemplate an incident to which he evidently attached a peculiar and mysterious significance. Not long after our Lord's holy soul had been temporarily separated from His body, while the Godhead remained inseparable from both, the fact of His death was by Pilate's orders ascertained; but, as if wishing to make assurance doubly sure, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And

[1] Adam of St. Victor: see the original in Trench's Sacred Latin Poetry, p. 73, "Volat avis," etc.

again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." Remember the context of those last words: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced."[1]

Let us try to look on Him once more, in connection with this particular incident, and with a deeply instructive passage in the last chapter of St. John's First Epistle, in which he obviously alludes to that same incident. What is the drift of the whole context?

He has already uttered what has been truly called a "most wonderful prophecy," and a "surpassing test"[2] of true belief: "Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth Him not, is the spirit of antichrist," which "even now already is in the world." To this thought he returns, when he tells his spiritual children that faith, or belief "that Jesus is the Son of God," is the principle of victory "over the world," that is, over the whole aggregate of human forces, habits, traditions, or influences, which will not take God for its centre, which exalts itself as a rival to His sovereignty. The belief that St.

[1] Zech. xii. 10. [2] Mozley, Essays, ii. 139.

John here speaks of is, one need not say, no mere assent to a proposition, but that assent morally vitalised,—a personal acceptance of, a personal self-surrender and adhesion to, the personal, living, and supremely lovable Lord. He affirms with a commanding yet endearing earnestness that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when He came in flesh, as sent from the Father, "came by water and blood; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth;" and then, "There are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and the three agree in one." The words, at first sight, present some difficulty. What, we may ask, is meant by "the water and the blood"? How did Christ come by means of them, or as bringing them with Him? What is the point of the contention that we must not think of water only, but of water in combination with blood? and how does the fact, whatever it is, of the connection of water and blood with Christ's coming lead on to the action of the Holy Spirit as witnessing for Him?

1. First of all, then, let us settle the immediate sense of the words, "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ." There was living then at Ephesus a conspicuous and enterprising

teacher, whom not a few were likely to regard as more profound and philosophical than St. John; who himself, very probably, looked down with superb indulgence on the aged Galilean as pious enough in his simple way, but quite uncultured, without any speculative ability,—with crude and unspiritual views of God and the universe, and wholly unfit to interpret Hebraic ideas to men who had breathed the air of Gnostic wisdom.[1] "One confusion," he would say, "which John makes, must be most carefully avoided: you must draw a sharp distinction between 'Jesus' and 'Christ.' 'Jesus' was simply a man eminent for wisdom and goodness, but not supernaturally born,—on whom, at his baptism, a heavenly power called 'Christ' descended, to use him as an instrument for revealing truth and working miracles, but to depart from him before he suffered and died." Now St. John, in the context before us, contradicts this absolutely. He insists that Jesus *is* Christ, that Christ *is* Jesus, that Jesus, who is Christ, *is* also the Son of God. "You must," he says in effect, "be quite clear in your own minds on this point; Cerinthus has tried to break up one Person into two: you must keep no terms with that theory of

[1] On the position of Cerinthus, see Bishop Lightfoot on Colossians, etc., p. 108, ff.

separation; you must hold to the truth of the oneness. This one Jesus Christ came by water and blood; that is, His Baptism and His Passion were means to the end for which He came. You must take His Baptism along with His Passion; you must not imagine that 'Christ' was not concerned with the Passion as well as with the Baptism,—as if He had been, so to speak, accompanied by water only, whereas He came with water and with blood; where you can see Him, you find them also. The selfsame Person who stooped to the waters of Jordan gave up His blood to be shed for us on Golgotha. This is He, the one indivisible Christ, in whom to believe is to overcome the world."

2. But then comes in, we may be sure, a reference to underlying spiritual realities. Water and blood, in connection with Christ, could not but be invested, in St. John's mind, with the ideas of cleansing and of propitiation; as, when he saw the gush of blood and water from the side of the sacred Corpse, he was apparently struck with a combination which seemed to present in a kind of symbolical unity the purifying and the atoning aspect of Christ's work. We know that both aspects were contemplated by this Apostle, who could affirm that "Jesus Christ was sent to be, and was, the propitiation for the sins of

the world," and could urge that whosoever "had his hope fixed on Christ," as "manifested to take away sins," must, of course, "purify himself, even as Christ was pure." And when Christ, being what He was, accepted baptism at the hands of His own Precursor, He gave the most emphatic testimony to the need of moral cleansing—not for Himself, in whom was no sin, but for His followers; and when He accepted the death of the Cross, that death, being *His*, removed the barrier between man and the free outflow of Divine mercy, for it met the claims of the law of Divine righteousness. And here we may see a new force in the words, "Not with water only, but with water and blood." Many will accept Christ as a peerless model of conduct, and will honestly desire to guide their lives by the rule of His ethical teaching, who yet recoil from the mystery of what Apostles call "propitiation,"[1] and explain away the emphasis

[1] The circumstance that the Greek verb for "to propitiate" is not used in the New Testament with an accusative of the person to be "propitiated" can hardly be thought to remove the impression naturally derived from 1 John ii. 2, iv. 10; Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ii. 17. That impression is that Christ, by some act exterior to the souls of individuals, became and is "the objective ground on which God, as Moral Ruler, can remit the penalties of sin;" that He thus removes the "necessary obstacle to fellowship" between the Holy One and sinners; but that, of course, the sinner must subjectively appropriate the beneficial results of His act. To treat this subjective appropriation as the only thing meant in these texts, to say that Christ made, or is, a

with which Apostles attribute virtue to His "blood." And yet the theory which reduces the Atonement to a signal display of sympathy, whereby One who was Himself sinless identified Himself with the shame and misery of sinners in order to reclaim them, will be found to impair the belief in our Saviour's personal Divinity, and fails to account for, or to justify, the mass of varied language by which Scripture conveys to us the significance of His death. No, believe it, both sides of truth are indispensable; our Lord was given "to be a sacrifice," and also to be "an example;" and the dependence of purification on the Atonement may at least be illustrated by the order of those words, "forthwith out of His side came blood and water."

3. But yet once more: when we hear that He "came by water and blood," it is well-nigh impossible not to think of that great ordinance in which water is made the "effectual sign," that is, the organ or instrument, of a new birth; and of that still greater rite which embodies for us, in a concrete form, the new and "better covenant," and in which, as St. Augustine tersely expresses it, we "drink that which

propitiation, merely because vital union with Him produces a state of mind in us which removes the barrier in question,—is hardly to do justice to their language. Cp. Dale on Atonement, p. 162, ff.

was paid for us."[1] By the mercifully considerate provision of Him who is God and man for us who have souls and bodies, the Sacraments of the Gospel, with their outward forms and inward gifts, are the chief means whereby His purifying and propitiating action is applied to those on whose behalf He came. In this sense—not as the primary thought of the passage, but as naturally contained in it, or derived from it—we may well admit that sacramental reference which has rooted itself so deeply in the devotional language of the Church, and which will commend itself to all who regard the Sacraments not as mere occasions for stimulating the religious affections, but as intimately connected with the Person and the work of the Incarnate. The whole thought, then, unfolds itself symmetrically; the events of Christ's baptism and death call up the idea of His twofold spiritual activity, which again presents itself in close revealed connection with the "laver," or font, of our "regeneration," and with the cup which conveys to us the blood of the great Sacrifice, and which, from that point of view, may naturally be taken to represent "both kinds" of the Holy Eucharist. And here, too, the warning sentence may be needed. The baptized Churchman who is not a

[1] Confessions, x. 70.

communicant would do well to remember that Christ came not with water only, but with water and blood.

And thus the water and the blood, in this large and manifold application of the terms, bear witness, with the Holy Spirit, for Jesus as the Christ, for Jesus as God's own Son. It is the Spirit's office, as our Lord Himself declared, to "testify" of Him; and the first and last "moments" of His ministry, involving as they do the two main functions which He came to discharge, and reflected as they are in the two great Sacraments wherein those functions are most effectually operative, have become permanent possessions of the Church; and their testimony to Him as the true Saviour of men, the "Yea and Amen of all God's promises," is in fact the Spirit's witness in them.

And as our Lord, throughout His ministry, was ever referring to the Father's mind and purpose, so here the "Apostle of His bosom" resolves the triple witness into the one comprehensive testimony of the Father, that He "hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Passion-tide is surely a special time for good resolutions; and here is one which we may fittingly take up, and ask for grace to abide by it,—a resolution to make this witness truly our own, to verify it by

obedience, to hold it within ourselves as a part of our deepest consciousness, to set our will on doing God's will, and so to know of Christ's teaching;[1] to appreciate it as corresponding to our needs and strengthening us for our duties; to provide ourselves against the assaults of unbelief with that inward witness "against which no argument is good,"[2] which represents an experience that cannot be illusory. May He who died for us enable us habitually to say, "I know in whom I have believed; I have heard Him myself, and am sure that this is indeed the Christ and the Saviour:"[3] and so to overcome the world and our own temptations by a faith in the Son of God that is vital because it is a total self-surrender, and that works through the loyalty of adoring and thankful love.

[1] John vii. 17.
[2] Trench, Hulsean Lectures, p. 149.
[3] 2 Tim. i. 12; John iv. 42.

SERMON IV.

THE MORAL TEACHING OF ST. JOHN.

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."—1 John ii. 3.

Every one who considers this Epistle will admit that, in some way or other, it is closely connected with the "Gospel according to St. John." It has been sometimes regarded as a sort of prefatory treatise, sent forth, in the first instance, to prepare men's minds for the larger book; others, and among them two eminent Episcopal commentators,[1] have described it perhaps with greater probability as a "postscript," or "explanatory" treatise, intended to recommend the Gospel, and supply a practical comment upon it. If it was written before the Gospel, then clearly, as indeed we should in any case have expected, the special view of our

[1] Bishop Lightfoot, Essays on "Supernatural Religion," p. 187; Bishop Alexander on the Epistles of St. John, p. 24. Bishop Westcott leaves it uncertain (Epistles of St. John, p. xxxi.).

Lord's Person and work which characterizes the narrative of the Fourth Evangelist must have long been part of the oral teaching familiar to the hearers of St. John. For two things are certain about the Epistle: (1) it presupposes this special view: for instance, it identifies Jesus Christ with the Son and Word who had ever dwelt with the Father; it speaks of Him as having "come" in flesh to take away our sins, Himself being sinless, to make known the Father, to bring "light" into the world, to be the "life" of His faithful people; it speaks of His "walk" or conduct, the facts of His earthly life put historically on record, as a known pattern of holy living; it dwells on the witness borne to Him; it refers most pointedly to "the water and the blood;" and (2) it applies this whole doctrine or statement about Christ, with intense practical force, to the lives of Christians as servants of the Incarnate, as bound by the most sacred obligations to make their belief in Him a vital reality.

It is true that if we could read the Epistle with absolutely fresh feelings, we should see difficulties underlying what seems simple because, as it were, we know it by heart. Critics have complained of the isolation of its sayings, of an obscurity in the connection of its thoughts. We are looking, as it were,

at columns standing each by itself, with no arches to form them into a series; we do not go on from this to that point in an argument; we hear so many oracular affirmations, often repeated with some slight changes of form. Well, undoubtedly St. John is not like St. Paul; the two apostolic minds were cast in different moulds: but yet, as we read and think over it, this Epistle commends itself as, in a deep sense, orderly; its iterations, its parallels, its contrasts,[1] are meant to bring out and illustrate some great central principles; and that which forms the starting-point and the basis is the dependence of all effective Christianity on the actual Incarnation of the Son of God. At the very outset, "in reference to the word of life," the whole system of saving doctrine, as gathered up in Him who is the Life, St. John points to a divine fact, the presence on earth, for so many years, in our

[1] The test of abiding in God is walking as Christ walked (ii. 6), retaining what had been heard (ii. 24); keeping the commandments (iii. 24), loving one another (iv. 12, 16), confessing Jesus as the Son of God (iv. 15). The test of possessing life is loving the brethren (iii. 14), having the Son (v. 12); he that (has been and) is born of God does not commit sin (iii. 9), overcometh the world (v. 4); again, he that doeth righteousness (ii. 29), he that loveth (iv. 7), he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ (v. 1), is born of God. To say we have fellowship with Him, and to walk in darkness (i. 6), to say we know Him, and not to keep His commandments (ii. 4), to deny that Jesus is the Christ (ii. 22), to say we love God, and to hate our brother (iv. 20), is to be liars.

very flesh, in true humanity apart from all sinful elements, of that eternal personal Life who was thus manifested, and to whom those who had seen Him could bear witness. The same idea comes forward further on when a test is given whereby to "prove the spirits" of teachers. Do they, or do they not, "confess Jesus Christ as come in flesh"?[1] Observe the care taken to exclude a false idealism—to urge that what is historical may also be most spiritual, most fruitful in blessing for the soul, even as the death of Christ, the shedding of His blood, is for us a source of "propitiation" and therefore of "cleansing." So it is that the Apostle, whose thoughts mount up on eagle-wings, who is rapt in the contemplation of lofty ideas, beholds them as embodied in a Person, who really lived as man among men, and holds a place in human history. That human life of His is not a mere symbol, nor even a mere sample, of the moral efficacy of those ideas, but is the very form in which God willed them to be realised; that so, throughout all Christian ages, men looking fixedly upon that life, and drinking deeply of its spirit, might have their own portion in that signally blessed experience, "We beheld His glory, a glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father." For the glory thus beheld was

[1] 1 John iv. 2.

the moral glory of Divine love, Divine holiness, Divine truth, shining from the "tabernacle" of a Manhood taken into God. And here we catch the true significance of St. John's persistent use of that verb "know," as in our text; and again, "ye know the truth," "ye know that He is righteous," "we know that we shall be like Him," "we know that we have passed from death unto life," "we know that we are of God," "ye know Him that is from the beginning," "we know that the Son of God has given us an understanding, that we should know Him that is true." At Ephesus, where he was living on in beautiful old age, the last survivor of those on whom the risen One had breathed, men were asking eagerly, importunately, "Can we know the spiritual world? Can we know God?" and were receiving confident answers, "Yes, by this or that form of spiritual philosophy." St. John had his answer ready, "Yes, but on Christian conditions, by confessing the Son, by believing the record that the Father hath given of the Son, by receiving the gift of eternal life as from the Father through the Son,—by union, in a word, with Jesus the Christ."

In this sense, then, as the beloved Apostle in effect teaches us, "before all things," as an indispensable first step, "it is necessary" that we should believe in the historical Jesus as the Christ,

not severing the two, as a great misleader of that age would have it, — and in Jesus Christ as personally identical with the Divine Son and Word; but always with a directly practical aim, in view of what this high creed is to do for those who hold it. They are to gain a deep conviction which, employing a favourite phrase, he calls a "witness" or evidence, implanted in their own interior being,[1] and approving itself to them as being from God. It will enable them to say not merely "I think," "I am strongly of opinion," but "I know." Thus will the word not merely float around them, but abide in them: thus will the "anointing from the Holy One" continue to teach them all things.[2] And so they live by Him whom they trust in as Saviour, and Lifegiver, and Advocate; their abiding in Him is a fact which combines intellectual belief with moral affection and adhesion; it involves His abiding in them, by a Presence which rescues them from the debasing tyranny, the polluting and paralyzing "touch," of "the wicked one."[3] Faith, with St. John as with St. Paul, is of the heart as well as of the head, not merely of word or tongue, but of deed and truth; it works through love; it "overcomes the world;" it is a principle of sanctifying energy destined to build

[1] 1 John v. 10. [2] 1 John ii. 20. [3] 1 John v. 18.

up Christian character, to foster and develop the seeds of eternal life.[1]

It is conduct, then, about which our Apostle is anxious—quite as anxious as St. James, although he exhibits, far more fully than St. James, its dependence on right faith in Christ as truly Divine, as cleansing and saving us through His blood. It is conduct, as distinct from mere talking, or from pleasing suppositions as to one's own goodness, on which the Epistle insists: for St. John is intolerant of shams, as becomes the disciple who was loved by Him who is the Truth. He has been called a mystic, but there is nothing dreamy or indefinite in his teaching about duty: it is very plain-spoken, even sternly direct,[2] uncompromisingly practical. And Christian practice, with him, is found to circle around the two ideas of light and of truth. What is it to "walk in light"? The phrase was probably taken from Isaiah's fervent exhortation to his fellow-countrymen: "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the

[1] To "believe" implies, with St. John, the keeping of commandments; loving God, and man for God's sake; overcoming the world, etc. See iii. 22, 23; iv. 16; v. 5.

[2] In i. 8, πλανῶμεν, in iii. 7, πλανάτω, imply a right path of conduct, from which it is "sin" to deviate; as there is a right path of belief in the Father and in the Son, to leave which is to run after antichrist (ii. 22–26).

Lord."[1] It means acting as in the felt presence of Him who is essentially the Holy One,—opening all the chambers and corners of the soul to Him, that He may enter, possess, and hallow them all; and it means doing this by faith in "the true light as now shining,"[2] the incarnate manifestation of the perfect goodness of God. And as to "truth," while the two shorter Epistles speak of "walking in truth,"[3] the First Epistle speaks of what is meant by doing the truth,[4] a phrase found also in the Gospel: "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light."[5] A Christian does the truth in so far as he is singlehearted in his dealings with the God of truth, endeavours to keep all inconsistency out of his inward life, avoids that fatal versatility of self-deceit which excludes the presence of truth from the soul, and, in this practical sense, makes good his profession of fidelity to Him that is true, as manifested in the Son, and interpreted by the Spirit, whose "witness" is that of "the truth."[6] The intensity with which the Apostle grasps this idea comes out in his repeated application of the term "liar" to those who, in various ways, falsify their Christian profession; and it may remind us of the emphasis with which, in the Revelation, he

[1] Isa. ii. 5. [2] 1 John ii. 8. [3] 2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4.
[4] 1 John i. 6. [5] John iii. 21. [6] 1 John v. 6.

adds "all liars" to that ghastly catalogue of the lost, which begins with the cowardly and the unbelieving.[1]

Light, then, and truth, are kindred attributes of vital Christianity, as our Epistle sets it forth; and this, whether we consider what concerns our own souls personally, or what belongs to our relations with each other. Under the former head, St. John would have us think of Christian conduct as exhibiting the two aspects of obedience and of purity. Take obedience first: "He that doeth sin," whose daily life drifts ordinarily into sin, whose life is characterized by wilful sinning, "is also thereby doing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness; he that saith, I know God, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar;" Christians must not let any specious teaching "mislead" them into the fancy that they can be righteous without doing righteousness, that there can be a fellowship with God which is independent of the claims of His moral law.[2] We live up to our spiritual sonship, our second birth "lasts on in its effects,"[3] while we renounce a rebellious license miscalled liberty, and set ourselves to keep "the com-

[1] Rev. xxi. 8.

[2] 1 John iii. 4, 7; ii. 4; i. 6.

[3] So Bishop Alexander (Epistles of St. John, p. 229) explains γεγεννημένος in 1 John iii. 9; cp. v. 18, and γεγεννημένον in v. 1, 4, and γεγέννηται in ii. 29, iv. 7, and v. 1.

mandments which are not grievous" in that spirit of loyalty which their Author will recognise as love.[1] This is to walk in light: this is to be comprehensively true. And purity is but another aspect of the same moral condition. "We know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."[2] We walk in light, we act the truth, when we seriously endeavour to avoid sin, and after falling into any sin, make haste to get the stain washed out in the blood of Him who is our ever-availing propitiation, who bore our sins when He represented us on the cross, and takes them away by freeing us from their power.[3]

But then the same principle will work itself out in love to our brethren. St. John had said at the beginning of his letter, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another;"[4] in proportion as we realise His presence and His claims, we appreciate more practically the bonds which unite us to those who are treading the

[1] 1 John v. 3; cp. 2 John 6.

[2] 1 John iii. 2, 3. Here as in ii. 3–6, the close similarity of the language used as to the Father and to the Son is more significant than any direct assertion of the divinity of Christ.

[3] 1 John ii. 2; iii. 5; iv. 10.

[4] 1 John i. 7.

same path, who, with us, have been made His children; we walk in darkness, we are liars, not only when we are impure or disobedient, but also when we are uncharitable. The "new commandment" of love is imperative;[1] we must earnestly set ourselves to fulfil it; so long as we do not, it is idle for us to pretend that we are in the light, that we know God, love God, are of God. In words perhaps more familiar than many other texts, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how *can* he love God whom he hath not seen?"[2] On the other hand, if "we love one another," God, who "is" essentially love, dwelleth in us;[3] for charity, while it helps us to gain more love for God, is itself a fruit of such love in its first beginning, is a "due sense" of that supreme love wherewith "He first" so loved us as to send His own Son to be our Saviour; and St. John will not recognise its existence apart from the principle of affectionate obedience to God; he views the two loves as inseparable. Such is the general idea of Christian morality, as defined and animated by a living belief in Christ, which we gather from his First Epistle. But he also gives us sufficient indications alike of the serious efforts required, and of the

[1] 1 John ii. 8. [2] 1 John iv. 20; but cp. R.V.
[3] 1 John iv. 12, 16.

effectual helps at hand. What if Christians should yield to the love of the world, to the irreligious influences, traditions, maxims, customs, ways of thinking and acting, which belong to human society as alienated from God, and trying to dispense with the obligations of His service,—to the triple allurement of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the vainglory of life; and so should take their side with what is not of the Father, and is destined to pass away in shame?[1] What if they should be led away by the spirit of antichrist, by one or other of the many antichrists that are in the world?[2] What if they should forget that they are pledged to a spiritual combat, that they must acquire strength to overcome not only the world, but a personal power of spiritual evil, the devil that sinneth from the beginning?[3] Assuredly, if we can in any degree sympathize with the aged Apostle, we shall do so when he turns to those in whom is stored up the hope of the Church's future, and pours out his heart in true fatherly thankfulness: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."[4] The words ring out with animating power. Why should not this

[1] 1 John ii. 15–17. [2] 1 John ii. 18; iv. 3.
[3] 1 John iii. 8. [4] 1 John ii. 14

description be true, become true, of any who now, at the outset of active life, are minded to remember their vow of service "under the banner"? Yes, why should not such a victory be still attainable for all of us who, whatever be the point in life's course that we have reached, have at least the capacity of responding to that grace which can bring "strength out of weakness," and restore "the years that the locust hath eaten"?[1] We are all under one supreme obligation: we are all bound, as Christians, to walk in light, and to act the truth, to cleave to the law of God's service, to wash our robes white in the cleansing blood of the Lamb. Let us have recourse, with renewed earnestness, to one agency of which St. John speaks as one who knows of what he testifies, the mighty instrumentality of prayer. "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us,—and we know that we have the petitions which we asked of Him."[2] And we may well put our petitions into the words of a collect too seldom heard in Church, but unsurpassed in richness, amplitude, and majesty; praying that, "as God's blessed Son was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and make us," in our way, "sons of God, and heirs of eternal life, so we, having this

[1] Heb. xi. 34; Joel ii. 25.
[2] 1 John v. 14, 15.

hope, may purify ourselves, even as He is pure; that when He shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom."[1]

[1] Collect for Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

SERMON V.

EXACTNESS IN CONDUCT REQUIRED BY FAITH.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."—EPH. v. 15–17.

THE Epistle to the Ephesians represents with singular vividness and boldness the twofold aspect of the Christian faith—its sternness and its tenderness combined. As life itself is full of contrasts, of changes between gloom and sunshine, of alternations which yet seem to be, in a deeper sense, correspondences, of diverse things "set over against each other," of various elements contributing by their very differences to one harmonious result,—so the religion which alone does justice to human life is manifold in its oneness; its radiant sweetness, its intense far-reaching gladness, are tempered and matched by what is subduing and what is awful. It has its promises and its threats; in its voices of comfort there are sad

undertones of warning; its privileges are weighted with obligations which imply the possibility of forfeiture. While it opens a door into the excellent glory, it also points downward into the blackness of darkness. It does, indeed, emancipate men from a thousand tormenting superstitions; but still it enhances their sense of the solemnity of this brief existence, in which character is to be moulded for eternity. And as both these sides of the Gospel are exhibited in the teaching of Him in whom it is impersonated, so are they put forward by the disciple whom He specially loved, and—which is most to our present purpose—by that sometime persecutor of Christ in His servants, whom Christendom venerates as St. Paul. Of him, as we know, our Lord said after his conversion, that he was "a chosen vessel to bear His name before men," His name in all its full significance; and Paul himself, in a farewell speech to the elders of the Church of Ephesus, could affirm and call them to witness that he "had not shrunk from proclaiming to them the whole counsel of God." Observe the emphasis laid on the *whole* counsel; it being so very easy, and often so very popular, to keep back this or that part of it, to "halve the gospel of God's grace"[1] by selecting such portions of

[1] Lyra Apostolica, p. 142.

it as may be soothing or otherwise attractive, and drawing a veil over the rest.

In St. Paul's presentation of Christian truth, we cannot but observe a completeness and comprehensiveness which are the outcome of this uncompromising loyalty. The message is given to him; he must utter it faithfully, every word of it; "whether men will hear it or whether they will forbear," it must be fully delivered; "a necessity is laid upon him;" the word is not his to alter, to shorten, or to suppress; it is really and absolutely the Lord's. He prefers, indeed —as, if we may so say, his Lord preferred—to appeal to motives of love and thankfulness; but, if needs must, he will persuade men by arguments from fear, even as Christ Himself had said, "I will forewarn you when you shall fear." So, in this Epistle to Ephesus, the rapturous exultation which contemplates the abundance of "spiritual blessings in Christ," the fervent longing that his readers "may have power to comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height," the magnificent proportions of Divine truth, and to get a real knowledge of that love of Christ which indeed is too vast for full comprehension,[1] are combined with the plainest admonitions to beware of all impurity, and therefore of those who by "empty

[1] Eph. iii. 18, 19.

words" might explain away the stringency of moral requirements, to disregard which is to incur "the wrath of God," His "holy hatred of sin," expressing itself in His penal justice. It is, he insists, a blessed thing to be vitally in union with Christ; but what if you forget that you have a "wrestling" to keep up, not merely with human adversaries, but with powers of darkness, "with wicked spirits roaming abroad, as yet, in this upper world"? Good reason have we, only too good reason, for carefulness of conduct, for "walking circumspectly" in the difficult path of life. It is a serious thing to live as a Christian, in the presence of Christ, before the eternal throne, with death and judgment and eternity in prospect. Life, for all its commonplace exterior, is fraught for us with momentous possibilities; vast issues may depend on the manner in which we spend a single ordinary day. This is the thought in St. Paul's mind when he writes, "See that," or rather, "how, ye walk circumspectly," or if we might alter the order of the words, as in the Revised Version, "Look carefully how ye walk," which gives a somewhat easier sense. If we keep the received order, it will imply, "Take care how you fulfil the duty of walking heedfully," of living, as the word really means, strictly, exactly, in conformity to a plan or method.

St. Paul was probably thinking of that striking sentence in an ancient Jewish book, "In my doings, in my line of action, I was exact."[1] When he uses the word "exactly" he is, in effect, saying, "Do not live at random; beware of thinking that this or that does not signify, that all scruples are morbid, that you can take life much as it comes, can follow the bent of spontaneous impulses, and trust to good feeling to keep you tolerably right." Observe, he does not mean that we are to make out for ourselves a set of rules cut and dried, and supposed to fit every question of conduct. We are to live by principles, which are deeper and larger than rules, but which yet will form a "rule of life" for us in this sense, that by their light we shall know more and more clearly, in proportion to our faithfulness, what is the right line to take in this or that set of circumstances. We must carry our religion into the details of life. "This act of mine was wrong, I must do so and so instead. I must guard this point: I must keep that temptation before me in its true colours, and steadily pass to the other side." "Will Christ be pleased with me if I do this, or if I leave it alone? Would He rather that I said what is in my mind, or that I kept it unsaid? Is there in this incident, at this turn of affairs, a call

[1] Ecclus. li. 19.

from Him to take a particular step? 'Show Thou me the way that I should walk in.'" To commune thus with our own heart is, in the Psalmist's pointed phraseology, to "order our way of conduct aright," to "behave ourselves wisely in a perfect way," to "cleanse our way by taking heed."[1] More briefly, it is to be, in St. Paul's sense, "exact" or "careful." To do otherwise, he assures us, is to fall below the standard of moral wisdom; it is to behave like "unwise" people, who have not considered the significance of their own presence in a world where a lax and easy-going religion will be found, in the long run, not to "work."[2] We may further illustrate this principle by the term "way" as applied by Christians in the apostolical age to Christianity as a prescribed system of belief and conduct.[3]

And then he adds a word or two more, by way of illustrating this moral heedfulness or exactness. "Redeeming the time," or rather, the fitting occasion, "because the days are evil." Our Lord once pointed to "the children of this world" as exhibiting in their

[1] See Ps. cxliii. 8; l. 23; ci. 2; cxix. 9.

[2] See George Herbert, "The Church Porch:"

> "Slight those who say amidst their sickly healths,
> Thou liv'st by rule. What doth not so but man?"

[3] Acts ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22. The phrase was probably suggested by our Lord's own description of Himself as "the Way."

own temporal affairs a practical sagacity, which might be a lesson to "the children of light" in regard to spiritual interests; and so here the Apostle is apparently alluding to the observant promptitude of a good man of business, who will not let a sound investment escape him. Be reasonable, he seems to say, in your estimate of the value of time. You live in days which abound in bad influences; all the more reason then that you should make the most of, should "buy up" or secure, even at the cost of effort and sacrifice, the opportunities for good as they rush by. Fortify all your religious habits; gather grace, as it were, with both hands, while you have easy access to the "means" which bring it within reach; cultivate a spiritual presence of mind, whereby you may be able to see at once what is the right thing to say, the right thing to do, so that you may not afterwards have cause to regret that you did not use influence just when it was most needed, that you did not speak the helpful word in its "due season," that you did not show sympathy which might have opened some heart first to yourself, and then through yourself to your Master; that you did not take the definite step heavenward, when the inward voice bade you take it; that you let the good moment pass, which is now beyond recall. And the Apostle sums up, in a word,

"do not be thoughtless," but live as really "apprehending," following out the drift and purport of "the will of the Lord," what He desires you to do and to be.

Does it seem, on the whole, a severe passage? Do we ask whether it is consistent with what the Apostle says elsewhere about the "liberty" which comes with the presence of the Spirit, as the privilege of those who are no longer slaves but sons? Yet liberty is best secured by order, such order as the Divine far-reaching wisdom has established for the due discharge of angelic as well as of human "services." To work in a groove may be the best support of moral life, if the groove be one of God's own fashioning; and the "carefulness" which St. Paul inculcates, as corresponding to the solemn realities of our probation in this world, has been a very condition of that high, refined, supremely attractive excellence which we understand by Christian sanctity. The best Christians, everywhere and at all times, have ordered their lives exactly, have been wise as children of light, have "redeemed their critical opportunities," have been "intelligent as to the will of the Lord." In some remarkable cases, like that of our own royal and saintly Alfred, they found that to act by method in common affairs, to be punctual in ordinary engage-

ments, to divide their time carefully between the calls of various duties, was a real help to becoming spiritually business-like. This "difficult" point of being "disciplined and regular in their religion"[1] they gradually attained by keeping up all good habits, and putting their will into each good work as it came. They "walked with God;" they prayed at stated times throughout the day; they reminded themselves, quietly but repeatedly, of the Cross; they prepared their souls for Holy Communion, and never forgot to return thanks for that unspeakable gift; they made faithful use of all the appointed channels of blessing; they "considered," they examined their ways with a fixed purpose against all kinds of self-deception; they cultivated a steadfast horror of sin; they set a watch against inlets of temptation; they suspected their own weakness, their own infirmity of purpose, their own liability to self-confidence. They took, in short, all possible pains to keep their conscience void of offence, to respond to grace, and to carry out the instructions of that Apostle who regarded himself as a signal monument of its efficacy.

And He who inspired St. Paul to give that teaching, and filled them with the power to apply it, is speaking now to our souls and consciences; perhaps

[1] Newman, Sermons, i. 252, on "Times of Private Prayer."

we may conceive of Him as saying, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of these days of Mine, one of these times of gracious visitation,—and you will not see it." While we have privileges, let us act up to them. Some day we may have to live farther off from holy influences; God's call may be less audible amid the disquietudes of life; the services of His House may be less frequently accessible, or be so performed as to give us less sensible help; interior trials may bring a cloud between His presence and our faculty for discerning it; our "days," in that sense, may become more "evil;" we may then say, in distress of mind and sore compunction of heart, "I wish I had cared more for religion when I heard so much about it, whereas now——."

Let us pray for that wisdom which the Apostle here commends to us as a necessary element in Christian manhood. Let us strive to put away that most childish thing, moral heedlessness. Let us use our Sundays, our prayer-times, our moments of softened feeling, of quickened conscientiousness, of earnest resolution, as precious opportunities to be seized, as safe ground to be steadily occupied; that we may enter into the spirit of our Father's purpose towards us, and know that happiness lies in a life that is consistently regulated by reference to His will.

SERMON VI.

GRACE AND THE WILL.

"Wilt thou be made whole?"—JOHN v. 6.

IN the general idea of religious life which pervades and characterizes the Bible, and contributes so much to that real unity which underlies all differences between its parts, there is no element more conspicuous or more significant than the importance attached to the office of the will. We are not, indeed, committed by Scripture to any unreasonable estimate of the power of free choice, as if it were in all cases unlimited; on the contrary, Scripture, though silent about speculative difficulties, is severely explicit about some limitations, which it traces to previous misdoing; thus, "Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin."[1] But, in speaking to moral beings, and treating them as responsible for their personal conduct, it speaks to them as capable of accepting or of refusing God, or, in ordinary ethical language,

[1] John viii. 34.

of choosing between good and evil. Herein it does but address them as men, for, as it has been said, "the will is the man;" and although we may hear Christian morality disparaged as "taking only a partial view of duties, and laying excessive stress on the passive side of virtue," with the inference that "Christianity is only adapted to weaker natures, and is not a masculine religion," yet the Scriptures, Jewish and Christian, do assuredly appeal to the whole man, to the collective energies of the entire moral being; they insist that it shall be regularly and determinedly active in the service of God, and of men in and for God; they demand a whole-hearted consecration of all its powers to the Maker and Master who conferred them, and who takes cognisance of their use. We are reminded that His servant must not "follow a multitude to do evil,"[1] must learn to stand alone, if need be, like "Elias" amid the "Carmel-din;"[2] must not be afraid of the ungodly, lest he be justly "confounded before them;"[3] must firmly withstand the pressure of a corrupted public opinion, must not refuse to be ranked with a faithful "remnant," and amid an "adulterous and sinful generation" must not be "ashamed of Christ

[1] Exod. xxiii. 2. [2] Lyra Apostolica, p. 110.
[3] Jer. i. 17.

and of His words." All through the sacred books[1] there rings the trumpet-call of that inspiriting mandate, "Be strong and play the man" for thine own soul and for thy God.

Hence it is that in the older Scriptures the obligation of a willing and earnest service is so repeatedly enforced. We meet with it in the ancient song of triumph, "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves;"[2] in the account of contributions brought for the sanctuary by "every one whose heart stirred him up," whom his spirit "made willing," of "rejoicings because with perfect heart men offered willingly."[3] The phrase would remind an Israelite of the freewill offerings, presented especially at Pentecost, and accepted only when clear of imperfection.[4] To these the Psalmist refers: "Thy people are freewill offerings in the day of Thy power:" "Let the freewill offerings of my mouth please Thee."[5] After the return from Babylon, and again at the mission of Ezra, this class of offerings was brought prominently forward,[6] as if to warn the people, at a new stage of their history,

[1] Deut. xxxi. 7; Josh. i. 6; 1 Kings ii. 2; Dan. x. 19; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 1.

[2] Judges v. 2. [3] Exod. xxxv. 21; 1 Chron. xxix. 9.

[4] Deut. xvi. 10; Lev. xxii. 21. [5] Ps. cx. 3; cxix. 108.

[6] Ezra iii. 5; vii. 16; viii. 28.

that honest thoroughness of spiritual loyalty was the condition of a healthful relation between themselves and their fathers' God. And the same principle reappears not only in the Gospels, where "the ideal of Christian ethics is given in a life that, of all lives ever lived on earth, was most full of positive virtue,"[1] but in that comprehensive exhortation of St. Barnabas to the converts at Antioch, "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord,"[2] and even—to go no further—in such details of St. Paul's teaching as the arrangements made for contributions in aid of poorer brethren; there must be "a ready will" to give, and the generous resolution must be perseveringly carried out; and Christians are praised for having grounded their "liberality" on the only appropriate basis, by "first giving their own selves to the Lord."[3]

Here is exactly the point: all turns upon this giving-up of self to the Lord, this surrender of the will to His will, out of which flows fresh intensity, fresh efficiency, for the surrendered will itself. "My son, give Me thy heart,"[4] is the standing invitation, one might say the persistent entreaty, of the supreme and supremely lovable Father. To give

[1] A. S. Wilkins, The Light of the World, p. 156. [2] Acts xi. 23.
[3] 2 Cor. viii. 11, 5. [4] Prov. xxiii. 26.

Him the heart is to put the will into His service, to appreciate the moral symbolism of the freewill offering, to make the right answer when He calls upon us, to decide, in effect, between His service which is freedom, and that false liberty which is the "slavery of corruption:"[1] "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."[2]

And here comes in, with its weight of tragic pathos, that frequent and truly divine remonstrance which was uttered of old time through the prophets, and afterwards repeated by the Incarnate "Lover of souls," "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." "Ye have no will to come to Me, that ye might have life." "How often was I willing to gather your children together, and ye were not willing,—ye willed it not!"[3] This requirement of the response of the will, a requirement with which God, as Moral Ruler, could not dispense, is set forth in passages like our text, where even a bodily cure is prefaced by the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" as elsewhere, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"[4] It is as if our Lord were saying, "The difficulty is not at all on My side.

[1] 2 Pet. ii. 19. [2] Josh. xxiv. 15.
[3] Ezek. xviii. 31, 32; John v. 40; Matt. xxiii. 37.
[4] Mark x. 51; cp. Matt. xx. 32.

So far as I am concerned, all is easy and certain; I am stretching out My hands to you, 'My heart is enlarged, towards you; it is on your side that the coldness exists, it is you who are slow to respond.[1] 'I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil;'[2] but what do you think of Me? do you care at all about Me, or do you secretly wish Me to importune you no further?"

Too often men practically answer, "Go Thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for Thee." They are too busy to attend: the business of temporal life crowds out all thought of the life spiritual. It may be, they do not dispute the claims of religion, but they hold themselves free to postpone any real regard to it until—well, until they have attained this or that position—say, some ten years hence; or perhaps until they have had time to become "serious," or until they see their way through questions which now preoccupy their minds, which may look clearer some day. Here, of course, is presumption reckoning on the future,

[1] "But man is close, reserved, and dark to Thee;
When thou demandest but a heart,
He cavils instantly."
G. Herbert, "Ungratefulness."

[2] Jer. xxix. 11. The words formed part of the ancient Introit for the Sunday before Advent.

and, in the meantime, telling God that He must wait. A person who treats religion thus does not really believe that it has any rights over him: to live consciously, even for one day, without God, is to live as if atheism were true.

But the indifference may take another form. It may found an argument on some peculiarity of disposition. "I am so constituted that I cannot interest myself in religion; it appeals, I doubt not, to others, but not, I know, to myself; these matters are not in my way,—and one must, before all things, be truthful; think of me as you may, you shall have no reason for thinking me a hypocrite." Or the effort to give up some habits admitted to be incompatible with a religious, perhaps even with a moral life, is represented as too difficult "in the circumstances." "I do not altogether defend my own practice in this or that respect; but I have got into a groove, and I must stay in it; whatever might once have been possible, I cannot now shake off what has become habitual, what seems to be like a part of myself. To be sure," the man may admit, "if I were in a different position as to home, or business, or society, I might think of what you advise; but, as it is——." In both these cases, in spite of the zeal for "sincerity," or the "necessarian" argument from antecedents, this

deprecating plea, "I cannot," is in fact a mask of want of will.[1] Allowing for the power of circumstances, "it is ludicrous," as the Greek philosopher in his incisive way puts it, "to lay the blame on them, and not on one's self as easily mastered by them."[2] Do you wish to be other than you are? Would you like to become independent of what now makes religion irksome, or duty "grievous"? Can you heartily desire it? This is the question which a moralist asks: he wants to enlist the man's will on the right side.

Again, if a person has got so far as sometimes to pray against some temptation, he may do so in a half-hearted way, not as if he really cared about it. His wishes keep a back-staircase open, which communicates with the "flesh" in all its forms. The prayer is paid as a sort of tax to obligations not yet formally renounced; it is not the true expression of a loyal desire of conformity to God's will. It is too like the terrible prayer of the unconverted Augustine, "Give me purity,—only not yet."[3] The man is reserving certain points; he is "looking on evil

[1] Newman, Sermons, v. 348: "What is it we lack? The power? No; the will, the real, simple, earnest, sincere inclination and aim to use what God has given us, and what we have in us," etc.

[2] Arist. Eth. iii. 1. 11.

[3] Confessions, viii. 17.

with eye of wistful thought;"[1] he has idols set up in his heart, while he professes to inquire of the Lord.[2] Perhaps he speculates as to what would happen if the temptation were somewhat stronger; then comes a half-avowed wish that it were stronger; then he does something to make it stronger. Ah! that is soon done; he puts himself, as it were, in the way of the temptation, and gets out of the way of holy things which bear an unwelcome witness for the solemn claims which it suits him to ignore. And the longer he thus abstains from those means of grace which, if honestly used, would be so powerful to rescue and uplift him, the more perfunctory and heartless will be his repetition of prayers which he does not, as yet, venture to omit, but which are becoming, with every such utterance, more profoundly and fatally insincere.

Once more, there may be no such conscious dualism in the soul's life between the sense of duty and the craving for evil indulgence. A person may be going through his routine of religious exercises with a certain sort of fidelity, but with coldness. A fog of apathy broods heavily over his soul: it besets him at the very altar, so that he returns from the feast of the Bread of Angels with his

[1] Keble's version of Ps. lxvi. 18. [2] Ezek. xiv. 3.

spiritual life, as before, in mere stagnation. He needs a fresh stream of living water to rush into it and to quicken it, to raise him out of the "listless, hopeless indolence, the dull refusal of high aspiration,"[1] the pitiful acquiescence in poor attainment, which belongs to spiritual sloth, and makes it a grave sin.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" So, day after day, the Healer of our sick souls unweariedly addresses us. Great indeed, it has been well said, is "the power of wishes in religion:"[2] can we make the effort of saying with sincerity, "Yes, Lord, I do wish to become better?" We shall have to say it, no doubt, with a sad consciousness of the languor, inertness, insensibility, which our past sins have heaped up to clog and deaden our renewed aspirations, thereby adding to that original need of grace to heal, assist, lift up[3] the will, and give it an impulse towards goodness, of grace as "prevenient," originating, stimulating, enabling, which is so often referred to in the services of the Church, and so forcibly emphasized by the Apostle when he traces our "willing" to the operation of God.[4] At the best we must humbly say, "Lord, I will,—but help Thou

[1] Dean Paget, The Spirit of Discipline, pp. 20, 46.
[2] Mozley, University Sermons, p. 242.
[3] St. Augustine, de Spiritu et Littera, 16, 20.
[4] Phil. ii. 13.

my unwillingness." Only, if we can say thus much, and mean it, everything in the way of restoration is still possible. What is *not* possible is that He, to whom we thus cry out of the depths of our own felt impotence, should refuse the help that He Himself has prompted us to ask for. Even that faint prayer is a response which His grace has evoked. We may, of course, refuse to be thus wrought upon, as we have so often before given the go-by to such opportunities; but if now, at last, we will use the power which Divine "love in action" is thus offering us, will yield ourselves frankly to its strong and tender touch, and reply in good earnest with a dutiful "Speak, Lord,"—the fire that has smouldered and seemed to be dying out may again glow, and sparkle, and burst forth into a flame which He Himself will rejoice to see enkindled,—which He will feed, if we will let Him, with fresh supplies of co-operating grace.

Good reason have we all to pray in the "dear familiar" words which, from our childhood, have announced to us the near approach of Advent, waking us up as by a peal of joyous bells. Let us put our hearts into the collect: "Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our wills," the wills of sinners who long to become "faithful." And then we may

proceed according to the proper sense of the original,[1] which in our translation is obscured: "that while we more earnestly strive to attain the full effect of the Divine working, we may receive in larger measure the assistance of Thy loving-kindness: through Jesus Christ our Lord."

[1] "Ut divini operis fructum propensius exsequentes, pietatis tuæ remedia majora percipiant." The "divinum opus" means the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul; the "remedia pietatis" are those aids which God "always gives to His children when He sees them striving in the pursuit of holiness." Goulburn on the Collects, ii. 190.

SERMON VII.

SPIRITUAL WAKEFULNESS.

"Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep."
—Rom. xiii. 11.

In order to appreciate this passage, and the inspiriting exhortation which follows it, we must look back to what precedes. The Apostle has been urging the duty of rendering to all men their dues, whether of tribute or custom, of reverence or honour. But, he adds, there is one debt which can never be fully discharged: "Owe no man anything save to love one another." And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, to pay this, as far as it can be paid, is to fulfil all other social obligations, as the "second table" sets them forth: all are summarised in one saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Do this, and you will never do your neighbour any harm. It sounds, perhaps, a little commonplace; we may think it a somewhat cold and negative estimate of that

sovereign grace of Charity, which the same writer, a year before, had described as transcending the greater "spiritual gifts," and destined to survive when they should be "done away." But, evidently, the expression is prompted by the form of the old commandments; "Thou shalt not" do this or that to the injury of thy neighbour. And then comes a transition, which, if it were not so familiar, would seem even startlingly abrupt. "And this you should do as taking cognisance of the critical moment, as knowing that it is high time for you to be roused out of sleep." It is characteristic of the Apostle to pass rapidly on from thought to thought; he discerns affinities so vividly, he keeps in hand, as it were, so many connecting links; he grasps, combines, lights up, exhibits in a series, ideas which might seem isolated to a feebler spiritual insight, even as his matchless gift of sympathy enables him to attract and assimilate hearts, to "transfer to himself"[1] the experience of his brethren. And so on this occasion he hurries his readers onward, until, from a commanding standpoint, they look forth with him on a large expanse of truths at once doctrinal and practical. His words begin to glow, and presently burn; the preciousness of a great signal occasion, a

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 6.

time rich in opportunities and charged with responsibilities, is first emphasized; and then that occasion is made to unfold its august and awful significance.

"Knowing the season," the time of visitation, the time to be "redeemed," secured at any cost, and utilised for the welfare of the soul. Many seem to pass through life without this instinctive perception of what it requires at their hands, of what it means for them. It has been said[1] that "of each man Nature asks daily, 'Knowest thou the meaning of this day; what thou canst do to-day,—wisely attempt to do? Answer her riddle, it is well with thee. Answer it not, pass on regarding it not, it will answer itself" to thy destruction. Let us put the thought into the language of Scripture. "To-day harden not your hearts;" "Son, go work to-day;" "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you;" "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things that belong unto thy peace!"[2] Of every such golden opportunity the Father seems to say to His children, "Do you enter into My reason for giving it to you? Have you considered what I wish you to do with it? what will be the inevitable consequence of ignoring it, until the blessing which it offers is hidden from your eyes?" The Apostle urges us to avoid so tragical an

[1] Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 6. [2] Luke xix. 42, R.V.

error. "See where you are, take hold of the occasion, grasp what it has got for you; read its lesson, and profit by what you read. It is time to have done with insensibility and indifference,—you have slept long enough and too long;" as elsewhere he quotes a fragment of a primitive hymn, addressing a "sleeper" as virtually in a state of death, and bidding him awake that Christ may shine upon him.[1]

By sleep, in such passages, is meant a spiritual condition which includes two elements. When we are asleep our senses are inactive, and our bodies are motionless. Men may be, and frequently are, intelligent, quick-witted, thoroughly alive, and keenly interested with regard to the things of this world, but in regard to the realities of the world unseen and eternal, to the needs of their own souls, to the claims of God, "they see and hear as people in a dream."[2] They attach no import to sacred words; Divine calls that come through events, ordinances of grace, or records of religious experience, are to them as unreal and unimpressive as the sights or sounds that form the medley of a dream, and vanish unremembered "when one awaketh." One who is in this state is, for religious purposes asleep, however socially, scientifically, or politically active; he is, in St. Paul's

[1] Eph. v. 14. [2] Newman, Sermons, i. 58, c. iv. 325.

phrase, an "unspiritual" [1] man, in whom the highest faculties are dormant; and therefore, of course, there is no spiritual movement in him; he does not improve or advance; how should he? The fruitful and beautiful energies, in which he might exert the truest life that has been given him, are practically for him non-existent. If occasionally some devout emotion or high aspiration stirs within that torpid and paralyzed spirit, it comes to nothing, it meets no response from the will; the hands of the slumberer are again comfortably folded; to be awakened, for him, is to be disturbed, and disturbance, as such is, annoying; he thinks not, cares not, that his "want," in the deepest sense, is pursuing him "like an armed man." [2]

But St. Paul trusts that those to whom he is speaking will subside no more into this ignoble and perilous quiescence. "The night," he exclaims, "is far advanced, the day is at hand," you can see the dawn over the hill-tops. It is as the voice of one who has long been looking through the darkness, and sees at last the gradual reappearance of forms, and then of colours, the broadening streak of yellow light, the tender "hues of the rich unfolding morn." It is not as yet full day, but every moment brings the sunrise nearer. St. Paul would say, "The kingdom of light

[1] ψυχικός. 1 Cor. ii. 14. [2] Prov. xxiv. 33, 34.

is not yet fully established; but we who have an interest in it are well assured that its triumph is approaching. The salvation which we are all expecting is nearer than it was when we first believed in its reality." It is probable that although the Apostle had distinctly predicted a great "apostasy," or manifestation of "the son of perdition,"[1] as sure to precede the Second Advent, yet he once expected both events to take place within a comparatively short period; but his words are not deprived of force by the non-fulfilment of such an expectation. It is as true as ever that "the day will come," and may come sooner than we think. It is as true as ever that we have to die, and that we may die at any moment. It is as true as ever that any and every time which brings God specially near to us is for us a day of Divine visitation. It is as true as ever that He is near as a Fatherly God, always accessible to us, always ready to bless all faithful purposes, to aid us in the work of breaking unreservedly with evil, or committing ourselves absolutely to good. "Behold, now is the accepted time;" let us therefore cast off at once what belongs to the kingdom of darkness, and put on the armour of the hosts of light; yes, wrap ourselves all round with His quickening and purify-

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 3.

ing presence; for if we would take up Christianity in good earnest, would do what it requires, and avoid what it prohibits, we must be vitally in union with Him in whom it is concentrated. How exquisite is the skill with which the Apostle, who knew so well how to "become all things to all men," shapes the appeal wherewith he sets himself to break our slumber! In an earlier Epistle he had enforced the exhortation, "Let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober," by the reminder, "We are not of the night, we are sons of the day."[1] So here, with the same purpose in view, he does not say, "For now is the judgment nearer than when we believed." That would indeed be a powerful stimulus, and he knew how to "persuade men" on fitting occasions by dwelling on "the terror of the Lord."[2] But now he wishes to prevail by encouragement, to draw us "with the cords of a man;" he assumes that faith and hope and thankful affection are surely existing in us, and only need to be aroused; the glorious object to which he points is that to which consistent Christians must of course be looking forward—our salvation; it is coming, it is on the way, the trial-time is running out: probation has its pains, its anxieties, its weariness; well, but you have less of it to go through, you can

[1] 1 Thess. v. 4–8. [2] 2 Cor. v. 11.

"descry, nearer, each day, the brightening goal"[1] of the eventful race. This admits of a manifold application—to the great universal "day of Christ," to any crisis in the life of the Church, or of the individual Christian, which calls for the girding of loins and the trimming of lamps, and to that conclusion of each personal pilgrimage which is really a day of the Lord for the soul that it brings singly before the Judge.

What follows? Two results follow, one negative, the other positive. We must cast away all deeds and words, all thoughts and wishes, however secretly cherished, that will not bear the light of God's presence, that are convicted by being brought into the tremendous light of His countenance,[2] and shown up, stript of all disguises, as unfruitful for all good, and prolific for all evil. Do we want to bring this plainly home to our consciences? If there is within us any habit, or tendency, or liking, which makes us unwilling to pray, which in effect disposes us to hide ourselves, if that were possible, from the presence of our Father and our Saviour, that is one of the works of darkness. Two special classes of such works of darkness are signalised in the exhortation, "Let us walk becomingly," according to a law of

[1] Christian Year, Fourth Sunday in Advent. [2] Eph. v. 13.

moral gracefulness, as those whose conduct is full in view; not in defiance of such a law, "not in revelling and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and wantonness," not in any base indulgence of animal sensuality; nor again "in strife and jealousy," or any violation of the King's own law[1] of love. Whatever is against purity, or the due control of the flesh, and whatever is against the mysteriously cognate virtue of charity, *that* we must not do; but "Thou shalt not" carries with it a "Thou shalt;" the house, cleared of evil spirits, must not for a moment be left "empty;"[2] the bad habits must be replaced by a sedulous cultivation of good ones; we must "put on the armour of light," take up the weapons of that warfare which is incumbent on all who, by the Sacrament of illumination,[3] have been made children of light. Observe, in passing, the emphasis of the word "armour;" we are not merely to put on robes of light, but are reminded of the obligation to fight against God's enemy and our own. Do we wish for any more particular directions? The Apostle cannot bring himself to give any; he will not pause now to recite a list of Christian virtues, as when, in other passages, he enumerates the fruits of the Spirit, and

[1] James ii. 8. [2] Matt. xii. 44.
[3] Heb. vi. 4; x. 32.

the various pieces of "the whole armour of God;"[1] his heart, for the moment, is too full; he gathers up all that he would say as to the resources and the obligations of Christian life into the compass of One Name, the Name of Him who "*is* Christianity." Elsewhere he bids us "put on tenderness, humility, charity:"[2] here he simply says, "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ;" let His presence enfold you like a cloak. Our Lord Himself symbolized the qualification for heaven by the wearing of a "wedding garment," as put within the reach of the guests of the great King; and St. Paul's phrase shows us how this qualification is to be secured, by drawing as closely as we can to Christ, by drinking-in His grace, by assimilating His spirit, by "living our life in the faith which rests on Him."[3] And then the warning is reiterated; having thus broken with our old sins, we must "not look behind, nor stay in all the plain;"[4] we must give up providing for the satisfaction of the sensual nature, must no longer admit its right to be pampered, must consistently refrain from every form of "sowing to the flesh,"[5] as those who know that of the flesh they will reap a fatal harvest of corruption.

[1] Gal. v. 22; Eph. vi. 11–17; 1 Thess. v. 8. [2] Col. iii. 12–14.
[3] Gal. ii. 20. [4] Gen. xix. 17. [5] Gal. vi. 8.

The most vivid and memorable comment which these words of the Advent Sunday Epistle have ever received is the conversion of one who, with strong affections and splendid abilities, had wildly misused his youth and early manhood, had wandered, as he himself expressed it, "far away" from the true home of his spirit, and "become to himself a land of poverty."[1] Craving for excitement of all kinds, he had run into sensual excess, not so much "from the love of it" as "from a fierce fever of mind."[2] He had tried to fill himself with husks, to "slake" the thirst of his soul "from foulest wells;"[3] and years of wilfulness, of interior conflict, of partial self-committal to an unchristian theory that promised to dispense with the "obedience of faith," had so impaired his moral energy, that for some time after he had got over his speculative objections to Christian doctrine, he could not form any clear resolution of submitting to the law of Christian practice. But, at last, when he was "under a fig-tree" in a quiet garden,[4] Christ "saw him" longing for strength to master the flesh, and passionately asking why he could not "now" be freed from its bondage. He

[1] St. Augustine, Confessions, ii. 18.
[2] Newman, Church of the Fathers, p. 257.
[3] Christian Year, Second Sunday after Epiphany.
[4] Confessions, viii. 28 ff. Cp. John i. 48.

heard, so he tells us, the voice of a child from over the wall repeating twice, "Take up and read;" he took up the Epistle to the Romans, and opened it at the words, "Not in revelling and drunkenness," following them to the end of the portion which is linked for us with Advent. "No further," says he, "would I read, nor needed I." He gained, in a moment, the power which he had wanted; by a supreme effort of will in response to grace, he cast off the works of darkness, he put on the armour of light, he clothed himself with the Lord,—and we know him, we praise God for him, as St. Augustine.

Such a conversion as his, which our Church still remembers on every 28th of August, is an exceptional work of that adorable grace of which, through this unique experience, he became *the* preacher among ancient Christian divines. His experience cannot be ours; and our responsibility, if we cling to the works of darkness, is greater than his, who, amid all his aberrations, was as yet unbaptized. But for us, in our need, and according to our day, that grace is still ready, "coming and calling us as at other times."[1] It speaks to us now; it entreats us to recognise our opportunity in this new Advent, to cast off, more determinedly than ever, all that has

[1] 1 Sam. iii. 10.

hindered our spiritual wakefulness, to read the meaning and estimate the value of life, as illuminated by the presence of Him who alone can make our souls vigilant, and fit them to partake in His coming "salvation."

SERMON VIII.

DIVINE SEALING.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."—EPH. iv. 30.

THE image of a seal is several times used in the New Testament: and in three passages of St. Paul's Epistles Christians themselves are described as having been "sealed," and the operation is more or less distinctly attributed to the Holy Spirit. Thus, when writing to the Corinthians, and including Silvanus and Timotheus in a class with himself, as preachers of Christ—of Christ as the concentration of all Divine promises,—the Apostle adds, "He that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and that anointed us, is God, who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts"—a phrase equivalent to the "first-fruits of the Spirit"—a foretaste as the guarantee of fulness to come.[1] Similarly, some five years later,

[1] 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; cp. Rom. viii. 23.

he tells the Ephesians that when they accepted the faith, they were "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which was an earnest" or first instalment of their future "inheritance, with a view to the redemption of the possession."[1] The last word might at first sight seem to mean, here as elsewhere,[2] the attainment of future blessedness by those who persevere; but when we consider its close connection with "redemption," of which in the New Testament we Christians are described as subjects, when we remember also how St. Peter uses the same word in a phrase which recalls the Greek rendering of a text in Malachi, "They shall be Mine as an acquired treasure,"[3] and how, in St. Luke's account of St. Paul's address to the Ephesian presbyters, a cognate verb expresses the Divine "purchasing" of the Church, we shall see reason for taking it in this sense as giving a Christian form to that ancient phrase which represented the God of the Covenant[4] as calling Israel "His own possession" and "treasure." This idea of Divine ownership is to be kept well in mind, if we would apprehend the idea conveyed by the imagery of sealing. And so in our text, which occurs in the Epistle for the nineteenth Sunday after

[1] Eph. i. 13, 14. [2] 1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 14.
[3] 1 Pet. ii. 9; Mal. iii. 17. [4] Exod. xix. 5, etc.

Trinity, the earlier statement is condensed with the addition of a special and a pathetically constraining motive: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby," or rather, "in whom ye *were* sealed until the day of redemption." Let us try to fill up the outline which St. Paul traces in these words.

And first, we should look to the construction of the passage, which is, so far, identical with that of the fuller statement in the first chapter. In both, as the Revised Version rightly indicates, the reference is to a past event; "Ye were sealed," "He did seal us;" as in other passages we ought to read, "We died with Christ," "we were buried with Him," "ye became dead to the law," "ye received the Spirit of adoption," "ye were called, were washed, were sanctified, were justified,"[1] and so on. St. Paul is pointing back to Baptism as the ordained entrance into God's household, the act which unites the soul to its Redeemer, not merely in outward profession but by spiritual incorporation; as he says elsewhere,[2] "As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ," that is, were then and thereby brought into true contact with His sacred and life-imparting manhood, the receptacle and fountain of all grace. Whatever special gift of "power" was to be bestowed

[1] Rom. vi. 8, 4; vii. 4; viii. 15; 1 Cor. i. 9; vi. 11. [2] Gal. iii. 27.

through the laying on of Apostolic hands,—through the rite which is now so appropriately described as Confirmation,—the effects assigned to the great regenerating Sacrament are such as to involve a true presence of that Holy Spirit to whose agency, in the text, the sealing is attributed. It is hard to see how the recipient of Baptism as such could be a child of God, yet destitute of that "assurance of sonship" which comes from the Spirit of adoption; could be "in" Christ, yet not "in" the Holy Spirit; could be incorporated into the body mystical, yet not really "inhabited" by the "Giver of life," who is the very informing and vitalising principle of that body.[1] Such incoherences and anomalies, involved in a theory which would restrict His indwelling

[1] The reference is to Dr. Mason's work on "The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism." A theory which (1) admits that baptism involves regeneration and the "quickening touch" of the Spirit, and, "in a sense," a reception of Him by reason of incorporation into Christ," yet (2) denies to the baptized, as such, that personal indwelling of the Spirit which is "the great prerogative of the Gospel dispensation," forbids them to consider themselves as "temples of the Holy Ghost," confines the "baptism with the Holy Ghost" to confirmation, and even speaks of the rite performed at the font as baptism only in "the modern sense," can hardly be said to commend itself by consistency, and would seem to require a serious alteration in the pastoral teaching of the clergy, in the practice of the Church, and in the text of the Prayer Book offices and the Catechism. Without accepting this theory, we can form a sufficiently high estimate of confirmation; see Newman's Letters, etc., ii. 234.

to confirmation, should deter a consistent believer in baptismal regeneration from adopting it.

And then, next observe that St. Paul is not speaking of a seal as affixed to a deed, to a contract or to a covenant. It is not a parallel case to that in which he describes circumcision as "a seal of the righteousness" involved in the antecedent faith of Abraham,[1] nor to that in which St. John describes the man who receives Christ's testimony as having "set his seal to the fact that God is true."[2] What is sealed, in the text, and in the corresponding passages, is not any external promise or assurance, however rich, however infallible: it is the Christian himself, his own actual personality, that is the recipient of the sealing. And here, perhaps, we may be reminded that in the great discourse in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel,[3] our Lord, having to prove that He can give to His followers the food that endureth to eternal life, affirms that He Himself was "sealed" by the Father, that is, was solemnly declared by the Father to be the true Christ. Yet we may discern the idea of ownership as recurring, though less distinctly, in this passage also; for in the context our Lord asserts a special Sonship as inhering in Himself, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven,"

[1] Rom. iv. 11. [2] John iii. 33. [3] John vi. 27.

as if the fundamental thought, in regard to the sealing connected with His Incarnate Person, were just this, that He was attested as God's own Son.

1. Ownership, property, possession, were ideas frequently represented in the East by the act of affixing a seal, a stamp, on what was thus possessed. Slaves were stamped with a mark or brand, indicating the master to whom they belonged, in a sense of "belonging" which has happily become strange to us. Again, St. Chrysostom, when commenting on the text, refers to the custom of thus distinguishing a particular "flock." This is then the original underlying thought; whatever else the Divine "sealing" may imply, it certainly affirms the sovereign right of the Divine Possessor over the souls to which it refers. They are sealed, inasmuch as He claims them for His own. They are not their own masters; they are absolutely His property; He is, in the most complete and uncompromising sense of the term, their Lord. This is the thought which a prince among English preachers was never weary of enforcing, as specially necessary at a time when self-assertion, under the name of independence, intrudes itself within the religious area; when, as he once expresses it, "you may hear and read a great deal which implies that God has no rights at all,"

whereas "He *has* rights over us to which there is no parallel" in human relations, and of which religion, if it exists at all, must be "the practical acknowledgement."[1] He cannot waive them any more than we can resist the vindication of their authority; but in revealing Himself as the Being in whose hand is our life, whose presence "besets us behind and before," He has also taught us to adore Him not as mere absolute will or dominant power, but as moral Ruler, as essential Sovereign Righteousness, and—dearest name of all—as our good Father, of whose tenderness even a mother's love is but an imperfect image.[2]

2. But, of course, the owner of a thing is really interested in its safety, and proportionately interested according to the degree of its value. He who marks a piece of property as his, thereby pledges himself to look after it, to take all due measures for its security. "That is mine; I claim it, and I will not have it disturbed or injured." As we read in the psalm, "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm."[3] The king's own signet on the mouth of the lions' den, the seal set on the stone at the door of the Holy Sepulchre, or, in modern secular

[1] Liddon, Advent Sermons, ii. 26, 186. Compare his University Sermons, i. 13; ii. 53; Sermons on Old Test. Subjects, p. 17.

[2] Isa. xlix. 15.

[3] Ps. cv. 15.

life, the government seal attached to the property of an accused person pending his trial, represent the same idea. And so, when we speak of persons, we see the significance of that "mark" which, in Ezekiel's vision, was to be set on those who grieved over national sin at a time when "men with weapons" were sent forth,[1] and of the suspension of the judgments decreed against earth and sea, in St. John's vision, until the servants of God had been "sealed in their foreheads."[2] The seal was to be like the blood sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites at the time of the last plague of Egypt: "the blood shall be to you for a token, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you.[3] Here, then, is the second fact intimated. God will protect the souls of His sealed ones; His peace will guard their hearts and thoughts; He will allow no hostile forces to pluck them out of His hand; He will guard them from stumbling so as to fall; neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate them from that love of His, which is, which resides and is gathered up, in His Son. And that Son, our Lord, who asked His Father to keep His disciples from

[1] Ezek. ix. 4. [2] Rev. vii. 3.
[3] Exod. xii. 13.

the evil one, is able Himself to do the like, as His promise came to a faithful Church represented in its chief pastor, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation."[1] Yes, assuredly, the Eternal Guardian of souls will do His part; but it remains for us to do ours. For His sealing does not deprive us of our own momentous responsibility; we are bidden to concur in His good purpose, to "keep ourselves in the love of Him," to guard ourselves from idols.[2] Among the forces which St. Paul, in one of the passages above referred to,[3] enumerates as impotent to defeat the good-will of the All-Merciful, man's own sin is not included: *that* can separate us from Him. We can, in truth, "reject His counsel towards ourselves,"[4] and can thereby—to combine two phrases from two of the Minor Prophets—"forsake our own mercy, and sin against our own souls."[5]

Ownership and preservation—these are the two elements of what is signified by the Divine "sealing." And thus we may see that, although we cannot read St. Paul as if he had written, "God has given to you

[1] John x. 28; 2 Thess. iii. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Rev. iii. 10.
[2] Jude 21; 1 John v. 21.
[3] Rom. viii. 38, 39.
[4] Luke vii. 30.
[5] Jonah ii. 8; Hab. ii. 10.

a seal," yet the notion of a comforting assurance follows upon, and is implied in, the notion of a "seal" fixed upon us. If the sealing takes effect upon the soul, it carries with it a promise to the soul, "Trust in Me, keep close to Me, and, as I call thee My own, so thou mayest be sure that I will do My utmost for thy safety." Or, to bring out the Apostle's thought more fully, the phrase which he employs looks back primarily to the past, with an implied and derivative reference to the future. We have seen how he refers to Baptism as the Divine act in which the sealing was effected. Hence, in the early Church, baptism, and sometimes confirmation also, when regarded as distinct from baptism, are spoken of as "God's seal" or "the seal of the Lord." In one passage of an ancient Father, the two ideas which we are considering are united; baptism, he says, is called "a seal, as being a protection and a token of ownership."[1] In the beautiful story of St. John and the young man who for a time fell away into evil courses, baptism is described as "the Lord's seal set on him for his security."[2] It is clear that the word, when thus applied either to baptism, or to confirmation following

[1] S. Greg. Naz. Orat. xl. 4.

[2] Euseb. E. H. iii. 23; cp. ibid. vi. 5, where also the "seal *in* the Lord" means baptism pure and simple.

upon baptism, or even to the admission of a catechumen in order to baptism, had quite a different sense from that in which a modern theory has applied it to the Sacraments, as if they were but pledges of grace already bestowed, or ultimately to be bestowed.[1] A great teacher, especially rich and deep on the subject of Christ's Sacramental operations, has developed the "Scriptural view" of baptism as not a mere ratification of a Divine covenant, but a Divine act whereby we are "taken out of our state of nature, and marked, guarded, conformed to our Lord;" the "earnest" then given being an assurance "that, unless we wilfully break off the seal, we shall be carried on to eternal life."[2] For thus the sealing looks onward to the time when our Lord will make up His jewels, will come to claim His own, to take it safely home and keep it for ever close to Himself. That will be a day of the Lord indeed, a day of "redemption," of entrance on the full "inheritance," of admission to the plenary enjoyment of those good things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

[1] This "obsignatory" theory characterizes Nowell's "Catechisms" in contrast with the Church Catechism as completed in 1604.

[2] Pusey, Script. Views of Holy Baptism, p. 137. Bingham misses this point, b. xi. 1. 6.

And this is as fully meant for us, as it was for those who were to hear St. Paul's letter read in the congregation on its first arrival in the Asiatic province. We have been sealed; as baptized Christians we have been, in a special sense, made the property of a Divine Lord, and through Him of His Father. And therefore, so long as we on our part are faithful, we may reckon on the protecting grace of our Master; if we respond to grace, if we choose to be kept safe, safe He will keep us—yes, and will "confirm us unto the end."[1] In the light of such a belief, not of a rapturous fancy, a dream of mystic enthusiasm, but of a solid and serious conviction, life is at once ennobled and enriched; it becomes well "worth living;" we gain a stimulus for moral exertion, a motive for avoiding whatever might "grieve," might tend to alienate, the "loving Spirit"[2] by whose presence we have been "sealed,"—a reason for glorifying God in and by that whole being of ours which is His, and which He wills to guard as His own property. The Cross was outwardly stamped upon our foreheads;[3] it has, indeed, been thought possible, that St. Paul's words have an undertone of reference to that most venerable custom whereby the

[1] 1 Cor. i. 8. [2] Ps. cxliii. 10 (P.V).

[3] "Christianus es, in fronte portas crucem Christi; character tuus docet quid profitearis." St. Augustine, Sermon 302.

early Christians reminded themselves at every turn of life, as doubtless they had been reminded at their baptism, that they were not to be ashamed to confess the Crucified, that they must "glory" in nothing but His Cross; at any rate we may well think of "the holy sign,"[1] and may often, perhaps, profitably use it as a symbol of our baptismal relation to Him in whose image we were thus most effectively re-created. For it is a living Lord whose impress was stamped upon us; and if we are to continue His, we must be continually exerting ourselves, in the power of the Spirit of life, to keep that impress uneffaced, or rather to brighten and deepen it by a closer conformity to His mind and will. It is easy to see how this may tell on our life. There are times when our moral vitality burns low, when interest flags, and enjoyments grow vapid, and we lapse into a gloomy torpor, in which all affections and energies appear to be frostbound; then this fatal inertness may be corrected by the thought, "After all, my life is worth something, for God's seal has been set upon it; I am of some importance in His sight; He takes account of me, He means to make something of me; I must respond by waking up out of this dreamy languor, and taking in hand the next duty with a good heart."

[1] Lyra Apostolica, p. 14.

Or again, when temptation is urgent, the question of the purest and noblest of Old Testament saints may recur with an emphasis unknown even to him who put it with such loyal decisiveness: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against the God[1] of my new birth, against Him who has placed me in such an atmosphere of sanctities, who offers me now, at this very moment, the grace which can bear me through this trial, and turn it into an occasion for increased conformity to His will?"

And so, let us steadfastly resolve, in His strength, to live as belonging to Him, and as special objects of His protecting mercy; that when His angels come at last to do their office in the great day of ultimate "redemption," they may find His seal inviolate on our souls, and may present us to that adorable Redeemer who will rejoice, as He only can rejoice, to recognise in us some lineaments, however faint, of His own pure image, some distant reflection of His own "transforming" glory.[2]

[1] Gen. xxxix. 9. [2] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

SERMON IX.

THINGS TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL.

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Cor. iv. 18.

George Herbert, in his "Country Parson," describes this epistle as "full of affections."[1] Beyond any other of the Apostle's letters, it lays bare the deepest feelings of that great heart, which has been keenly wounded by sufferings more acute than "the trouble that came upon him in Asia, and pressed him out of measure, beyond his strength, so that he had despaired even of life."[2] Life is still his: but he has been made to feel, as he had not felt before, the pain which can be inflicted by coldness, suspiciousness, and something like hostility on the part of those towards whom, as he says, with touch-

[1] C. 7. He adds, "Never was there such a care of a flock expressed, save in the great Shepherd of the fold."

[2] 2 Cor. i. 8.

ing emphasis, his heart has been habitually "enlarged."[1] They have listened to malignant misconstructions, set afloat by those Judaizing teachers who made it their business to stamp out his work wherever Jewish Christians were to be found. It was bitter indeed for him who during a year and a half had been the guest of Justus, who had baptized Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, to have to defend himself against the imputation of double-mindedness, of shifty diplomacy, and of what in modern phrase might be called priestcraft. It might well make him write warmly, and also mournfully. Much, he felt, was against him; he was hard put to it, "perplexed, cast down;" it was as if a "process of dying" had begun in him; his bodily health, continually impaired by the "thorn in the flesh," had been yet further affected by the mental distress of an intensely sensitive nature. But faith comes to his aid; "though the outward man be decaying, the inward man is daily renewing its strength;" the "momentary affliction seems light" after all, when he considers that it is producing, "in a manner and to an extent surpassing all thought, an eternal weight of glory;" and this comes home to him when he seriously contrasts "the things seen," as "temporal," with "the things not seen" as "eternal," and, at that high stand-

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 11.

point of illuminated reason, looks resolutely away from the former to the latter.

It is, we see, by faith that he thus overcomes the depressing influences of a position so full of trouble and anxiety. He is content to be but the "earthen vessel" in which a Divine "power" is lodged; as he says afterwards, he will "take a pride in his infirmities" if they serve to exhibit "the strength of Christ,"[1] or, in the context before us, if "the life of Jesus can be manifested" through an organ so intrinsically frail. Faith assures him that the visible scene, amid which for the present he has to toil and to suffer, will not last, and that her own invisible sphere will last; therefore it is simply religious common-sense to disregard the one in comparison with the other. Not, of course, to disregard it absolutely; for the Apostle had already written sternly to those who imagined that they showed their spirituality by neglecting their proper temporal duties;[2] and he afterwards repeatedly insisted that whatever work a man had to do in this world, were it even the household work of a bondservant, must be done "heartily" as to the Lord, and in His all-ennobling Name.[3] But if one set of occupations and interests were certainly to come to an end next week, and another set were

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [2] 2 Thess. iii. 11. [3] Col. iii. 23, 17.

certainly to last out our lives, we all know to which our minds would assign the predominance.

By "the things that are seen," St. Paul is not thinking, immediately, of the whole of this visible order of things, the existing universe, or, in a large sense, the world, but rather of his own actual surroundings, the sights, the sounds, the sensations, of everyday life. That is enough to make out the contrast which has for him such consoling and inspiriting efficacy. And it is, perhaps, most practically useful for us to understand "the things that are seen" in this sense. If we are warned that the social fabrics standing around us, so venerable and yet apparently so vigorous,—that a civilisation so complex in resources which science in its unparalleled activities is constantly developing,—may yet be fraught with the seeds of a slowly working decadence, the look of stately permanence, as of some "eternal city," emboldens us, especially under the influences of modern life, to repel such forebodings as the dreams of a morbid fancy.[1] If we are told that the vitality of this earth is gradually wearing out, that, although it may be long ages hence, yet at

[1] "We have before us an increased power of things seen, and this increased power implies a diminishing hold upon us of things unseen." —Gladstone, The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture, p. 283. See Newman, Serm. iv. 200.

some date not only "tower and palace and temple," not only thrones and republics and philosophies, but—

> "the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,"[1]

we are not strongly impressed by a prospect which seems so distant; we say, as the selfish French king said of the probable breakdown of his monarchy, "It will not come in my time." It is quite otherwise when we think of the visible world as far as it concerns ourselves personally, of what we may call our world. That our hold on life is so uncertain, that for us it may end so speedily, and that it must end within a time which in the retrospect will look so brief—

> "When That, which once seemed life, seems nought
> Before the enormous *This*,—
> All days, all deeds, all passions past
> Shrunk to a pin's point in the vast;"[2]

that however we may now be immersed in, and preoccupied with, a diversity of interests, in the manifold and richly coloured scene which modern life presents, yet a day will come when life will be, for each of us individually, an affair of an hour or a few minutes; and that the next day the world will go on as usual, and people will talk and plan and execute, and some will stop to ask for particulars about our

[1] Tempest, iv. 1. [2] F. T. Palgrave, Hymns, p. 33.

death, and kindly hope that we did not suffer much, and perhaps say they will make a point of attending our funeral, while we all the while shall be in the unseen world, shall have entered upon "that tremendous experience"[1] which awaits each one of us in his lonely personality, shall have begun to exist under totally new conditions, of which we can at present form no idea whatever,—this touches, this strikes home. "The things that are seen" are for us most truly "temporal." We sometimes contrive to forget it; or we think that we remember it enough by the occasional use of general phrases which in all ages have noted the fact that human life is like "grass," like a "shadow," like "the trace of a cloud," or the track of a ship in the waves,[2] that "the flying years are gliding away,"[3] and "the inevitable hour" is approaching; yet while repeating these formulas as descriptive of a common destiny, we manage to put aside their personal application. The words of St. Paul, understood in the light of a context so deeply personal, command us to face that application, even as it is pressed home on us by our Lord in that parable of which the central words are, "This night."[4]

But the other side of the case must be firmly appre-

[1] Liddon, Advent Sermons, i. 82.
[2] Wisd. ii. 4; v. 10.
[3] Hor. Carm. ii. 14. 1.
[4] Luke xii. 20.

hended, if we are to gain anything from a vivid conviction of the precariousness of our own interest in things visible. If there is nothing unchangeable to be really taken hold of, we are not likely to care much about moralisings on the transitory nature of all that belongs to this world. We should be apt to take it as it comes—to say, "All the more reason for making the most of it, and thinking as little as possible of the inscription graven upon it, 'Passing away.'" It is another matter when we can say, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever;" still more, when we can in serious faith assimilate St. Paul's assurance that "the things that are not seen are eternal." The Jew, as distinct from the Christian, could not rise to the full height of this majestic proposition. He felt practically sure that somehow it would be well with him, if in death he could cast himself upon the God of his fathers, who had said, "I am the Lord, I change not."[1] But he could not call up a "picture" of things at once invisible and eternal, as of realities in which he would have his part. "He looked out of this visible world upon a void."[2] But what for him was left in shadow, is brought out into clear sunshine for the believer in a risen and living Christ. The whole fact of life's

[1] Mal. iii. 6. [2] Mozley, Essays, ii. 168 ff.

instability, in its full bearing on the individual consciousness, can be contemplated without shrinking by one who can say deliberately and sincerely, "And the third day He rose again from the dead." The hope of such an assurance was a powerful motive in the conversion of our forefathers. One of them, we are told,[1] said to his king, when the question of accepting Christianity was discussed, "Man's life seems like the quick flight of a sparrow through your hall, when we are sitting by the fire on a stormy winter's night; the bird comes out of darkness on one side, it passes into darkness on the other. Even so we know not what came before this life, nor what shall come after it; if the new teacher can tell us, let us follow him." They did so, and Northumbria became Christian; and we in our time have been bred up in that teaching, we take it as interpreting life. And as in the words, "the things that are seen are temporal," we are bound to find a warning for ourselves in particular, so in the words "the things that are not seen are eternal," we are enabled to read a promise which, if we can but fulfil its conditions, we can make personally our own. "I myself," we say, "must ere long pass out of this world, must bid farewell for good and all to my 'little compact home of an existence, where

[1] Bede, E. H. ii. 13.

I dwell,' if sometimes 'complaining, yet as in a home;'[1] I must take the awful plunge into unknown waters, must endure, if conscious at the last moment, the 'sense of ruin and collapse, as though my very being had given way.'[2] Yes, but if only I preserve my faith and hope, and depart in the peace and grace of the Redeemer, I shall, in my own personal experience, exchange the earthly tabernacle which will then have been dissolved for a building from God, eternal in the heavens; and there I shall be at home with the Lord, who died, and is alive for evermore, and holds the keys of the unseen world and of death."[3]

One cannot say such words, nor listen to them, without remembering that for many they are but so much obsolete phraseology, the survival of a "theological and unscientific" phase of thought. Persons tell us that the idea of an unseen and eternal world is what we have no right to hold, because we have no means of "verifying" it: that even if we like to fondle it "emotionally," we must not pretend to affirm its truth. Paul naturally did, so they would say, for he knew no better; but we ought to have learned "to ask no more than sense and senses

[1] Carlyle, French Revolution, i. 23.
[2] Newman, The Dream of Gerontius.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 1, 8; Rev. i. 18.

show."[1] Perhaps they add, that the notion of a literally endless existence is not only overpowering to the imagination, but burdensome to the moral nature; that men really do not want it, although Christian prepossessions may make them think that they would enjoy it; that the only immortality worth speaking about is an immortality of influence, resulting from the remembrance of a life that has given one little impulse to the progress of humanity. But what poor talk all this seems, in view of the spiritual capacities and aspirations which are linked inseparably to the personal consciousness; while, as it has been well observed, the very progress of that which some would treat as an all-sufficing civilisation makes it more and more impossible that in this life they can be fully exercised or satisfied![2] No, in the profession, "I look *not* for the life to come," we discern, in fact, "the abandonment of the great prediction of reason," the "degradation of man, grovelling and cleaving to earth and clay," refusing to be "raised and lifted up."[3] It is, on the other hand, a

[1] See F. T. Palgrave, The Visions of England, p. 322; and further on, p. 325,

> "'Tis Reason bids you scorn the facile sneer
> That bars the search for truth beyond the sphere."

[2] H. S. Holland, Christ or Ecclesiastes, p. 117 ff.

[3] Mozley, University Sermons, p. 69, and Essays, ii. 134.

proclamation of that "fact of personality which distinguishes the self-conscious moral being from the beasts that perish,"[1] in other words, of the real grandeur of human nature, as God originally fashioned it, and as His redemptive love broods over it, which the Apostle makes when he says with such clear confidence, "The things that are not seen are eternal."

We believe this; but do we not sometimes feel an inconsistent reluctance to let the belief have its perfect work, to make the unseen and the eternal effectively supreme over that which is visible and temporal? Have we not sometimes gone near to re-enacting in spirit the old scene of the birthright sold for pottage? Have we not tried to secure an immediate pleasure, or gain, or step in life, by the sacrifice of moral and spiritual fidelity? If so, there are ways of setting this right. It will be useful to find a few spare moments, every day, for thinking steadily about God,—His nature, presence, providence, majesty; the three great moral characteristics of His moral perfection, "sanctity, truth, and love;"[2] His revealed good-will to us, His promise to care for us, to guide us in life, to support us in death, to bear us on into eternity, if we will put ourselves

[1] Aubrey Moore, Essays Scientific and Philosophical, p. 234.
[2] Newman, Grammar of Assent, p. 412.

into His hands. We may profitably trace out the lines of conviction as to these primary religious ideas —for instance, our sense of a spiritual "selfhood," of dependence on a higher personality as its source, of subjection to a moral law; or the significance of Christ's life and character, or the evidence enfolded in religious lives, or the consciousness formed by religious obedience. It will be helpful to read over two or three of our Lord's discourses, to see what life looks like from His point of view, to think of Him as now in the eternal world, invisible to sense but perceptible to faith, a centre and fountain of inexhaustible spiritual force, a Saviour who takes account of each of us as if He had no other beings to provide for. Again, to repeat the Creed slowly and seriously will often have the effect of burning into our minds a just sense of the truths which it enumerates. Or we may consider how, in the Church of the Incarnate, the invisible employs the visible as its organ, and things of time sacramentally convey to us the foretaste of an eternal inheritance. We may picture to ourselves the hosts of angels on one side, and the powers of darkness on the other side, which faith points out to us as carrying on now, in the unseen world, the standing contest between good and evil; or may turn our thoughts to the multitudinous

"majority" of the dead, including some whom we have known and loved, and whom we never can think of otherwise than as living. Or we may remember how, in bygone days of trouble, we seemed to see below life's surface, and longed to gain a "foothold on the shores of eternity." There is yet one other and most indispensable method, without which all others will be in the long run unavailing; to clear the conscience of whatever tends to blind the eye of the soul. It is only the single-hearted, the pure in thought and purpose, who will appreciate the reality, and do justice to the claims, of what is unseen and eternal, because it is only they who will ultimately and perpetually "see God."

SERMON X.

THE DISCIPLINE OF EXPECTANCY.

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."—Ps. xxvii. 14.

THIS is the concluding verse of a psalm which glows with lofty faith, and yet is clouded by a sense of depression. The magnificent opening—our familiar *Dominus illuminatio mea*—with its fulness of glad exuberant energy, its high-hearted disclaimer of all fear in view of a host of enemies, and its fervid avowal of one supreme desire, to dwell in the Lord's house and to gaze upon His beauty (words once, it is said, recited by a martyr at the beginning of his torments),[1] is followed up by entreaties which represent a change of mood. It is one of those transitions so common in the Psalter, which make it so truly human a book. Acting on the invitation, "Seek ye My face," the Psalmist begs his Lord not to cast him away, not to forsake him; he describes

[1] See Alban Butler, Lives of the Saints, March 29.

himself as an orphan whom God will adopt; he glances tremblingly at a contingency which would surely have overwhelmed him—

> "What if no faith were mine, to see
> Thy love in realms where life shall be?" [1]

and then he turns, mentally, to some other soul which may profit by his experience, and repeatedly counsels it to "wait on the Lord." We all remember the exquisitely tender expansion of this maxim in the Prayer Book rendering of the first clause of this verse, "O tarry thou the Lord's leisure;" and we may easily call to mind similar passages in the Psalter, and in other parts of the Old Testament: "Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon Him;" "I waited patiently for the Lord;" "I look for the Lord, my soul doth wait for Him." [2] Between the benedictions which the dying Jacob pronounces on two of his sons there breaks in, as if irrepressibly, the affirmation, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." Isaiah exclaims determinedly, "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob;" and Jeremiah, with sweet pathos, pronounces it "good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the Lord's

[1] Keble's Version.

[2] Ps. xxxvii. 7; xl. 1; cxxx. 5. Cp. Ps. lxii. 1, 5.

salvation."[1] These are but samples of a series; let them suffice to remind us of the stress laid in the older Scriptures on the duty of religious patience, of waiting submissively for God's mercy in God's own time.

The history of Israel throws full light on this broad stream of Old Testament language. The chosen people were placed under a discipline of expectancy; the attitude of those who best represented the moral idea of Israel was that of men "just and devout," who were waiting for the great national "consolation." It was a posture of what St. Paul calls "earnest expectation;"[2] ear and eye, so to speak, were on the stretch, turned to the quarter from which help was likely to come:—

> "Still from father to son,
> As the days went by of old,
> The whisper was handed on,
> The story of hope was told,
> And the evening was tinged with gold."[3]

That hope, the "great Messianic expectancy," was not the mere expression of impatience under Syrian domination, or intestine scandals, or Roman conquest: its source was in the "ancient mountains"

[1] Gen. xlix. 18; Isa. viii. 17; Lam. iii. 26.

[2] Rom. viii. 19.

[3] From a version of Manzoni's "Ode on the Resurrection," in the Monthly Packet, vii. 327.

of Jewish history, royal, patriarchal, and primeval, as prophetic in its entirety of the future kingdom of God, and ultimately, with increasing distinctness, of Messiah as its King;[1] its basis was that word of the Lord which, as a Psalmist wrote, He had "magnified above all His Name," that infallible promise which, in its strength and preciousness, transcended all other manifestations of His character.[2] And so men asked themselves, When would the sacred promise fulfil itself? when would He appear, the expected Redeemer, the peerless Prophet, the King reigning in righteousness, the Anointed One on whom was rested the weight of an intense traditional hope? He was sure to come at last, and might come soon: He could not come (it would often be felt) more opportunely than as a Deliverer from present afflictions, which would seem to have reached the intolerable point. The tree was felled to its root:[3] surely now the Branch would spring up out of it. Oh for the time when the Lord should rend the heavens, when the Coming One should come indeed! And still the years went by, and still He came not; and good men's hearts were sick with hope deferred; and it became harder and harder to tarry in firm

[1] Edersheim, Prophecy and History, p 24.
[2] See Bishop Perowne on Ps. cxxxviii. 2.
[3] Isa. x. 34: xi. 1.

patience for "the vision that was yet for its appointed time:" and men took up, instead, with vulgar and secularised caricatures of the pure ideal, and "looked for a Jewish Alexander or Cæsar,"[1] as afterwards they followed Theudas, or Judas the Galilean, or the fierce insurgent who called himself "Son of the Star."[2] It is by this "popular degradation" of a conception which had been so elevating while it continued spiritual, that we can best measure the moral attainment of the soul that still speaks to us in our second evening canticle; "'Now, O Master, Thou art letting Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation:'—I have waited so long for it, and lo, it has come; with Thy Christ at last in my arms, what is left for me, but to give Thee thanks, and to die?"

Such was the plenary fulfilment of the hope which had upheld a long succession of true Israelites, when, but for it, their hearts might have fainted, their steps might have slipped. But "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," for we too are, in our own measure, subjected to similar discipline; we, too, in various senses of the Apostle's comprehensive phrase, are "saved by hope." In that great chapter of the Epistle to the Romans which has

[1] Liddon, Bamp. Lect., p. 94.
[2] Barcochba, A.D. 132.

turned so much weakness into strength, St. Paul propounds three motives for Christian readiness to "suffer with Christ."[1] The first is, that all present suffering is wholly incommensurate with the promised glory. The second is, that the whole creation has been subjected, for a Divine purpose, to a law of pain, disappointment, failure, with a prospect of ultimate relief. And the third is derived from the very nature of hope. It holds a high place in the accepted Christian view of life. When we were brought into a state of salvation, we were presented with an object of hope. It is not, then, open to any of us to say, "I thought expectancy was only for those outside the fold, actual possession for those within it." The answer is, "No: you forget that it is hope which has led you thus far; and hope looks to a future, it implies something as yet unrealised. But furthermore, not only is hope to be exercised as to our attainment of eternal salvation, not only are we to be "as men that wait for their lord, with loins girt about and lights burning, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately," but all along the Christian's path are landmarks bearing the inscription, "Wait on the Lord." There must be repeated condensations, at various points of life, of

[1] Rom. viii. 18 ff.

the great general "waiting;" again and again has patience to be trained, and impatience, even when wearing a religious garb, to be repressed and mortified. Let us look at two or three forms of this literally inevitable trial.

1. Many who are thoroughly in earnest are yet, almost in proportion to their "zeal for God," accessible to serious perplexities on account of what they deem the slow advance of true religion. This phenomenon may have several aspects. For instance, in the age which may be designated by the name of St. Athanasius, Catholic Christians who remembered the Nicene Council must have been repeatedly astonished and disheartened by the obstinate vitality of the Arian heresy in one or other of its forms. Or we may think of the strangely tenacious hold which paganism kept through ages over populations which, on the whole, had been Christianised; so that many a faithful bishop or priest would be tempted to despond, as he saw the old idolatry living on in customs which he had vainly striven to eradicate, in the heathenish charm, or the dread of witchcraft, or the homage to spirits that haunted the well, the rock, or the tree.[1] Or, in our own day, are not some

[1] Johnson, Early English Canons, i. 415, 513. Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, ii. 1545.

hearts saddened by the contrast between the early and the later progress of Christian missions, by the scantiness of such success as has been achieved in the contest with Eastern polytheism or pantheism, or by the apparent hopelessness of attempting to win men over from Mohammed to Him whom Mohammed himself acknowledged as the great Prophet Jesus, Son of Mary? And without looking so far afield, what pastor or Church-worker in our own great towns is not at times overpowered by the huge inaccessible masses of "modern heathenism"? or what country clergyman has not frequent "need of patience" while he works singlehanded, year after year, in a depressing atmosphere of dull insensibility, amid souls to which religious ideas are like the seed "sown by the wayside"? In how many tones throughout Christendom, or, to limit our scope, throughout England, does "the cry go up, 'How long?'" What is to be said by way of consolation to those who instinctively utter it? This simply, that the cause is God's; that He keeps in His own hands the supreme administration of its interests, and is likely to know better than men or angels how best to carry it through. In this respect, as in others, His scheme can be but "imperfectly comprehended;" it is His ordinary way to be "deliberate

throughout His operations," to "accomplish His ends by slow successive steps."[1]

It has often been asked by opponents of Christianity, "If Christ's coming was so important, why was it so long delayed?"[2] but the answer was involved in St. Paul's significant phrase, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son,"—then, and not before; and no one but He could know when His time had reached its fulness. Nor can we pronounce as to what would be real success or real failure: we do know that, in dealing with moral beings, He allows His purposes to be thwarted by their misuse of freewill, or by the imperfections which attach to them as His instruments. We know, too, that the hindrances which He does not abolish may be effective as stimulants to further effort on the part of those who are at work to make straight His way; and, in that sense, if not in other senses, may be conditions to the accomplishment of the task. Meantime, what He asks of us is not success, but fidelity; and fidelity,

[1] Butler, Analogy, ii. c. 4.

[2] Comp. Origen c. Cels., vi. 78; Gregory Nyssen, Catechet. Orat. 29; Augustine, Epist. 102. 8. A Japanese Bonze put the same question to Francis Xavier. For the answer, see the Epistle to Diognetus, c. 9; Martensen, Christian Dogmatics, p. 226; Liddon, Advent Sermons, i. 158 ff.

whatever else it means, assuredly means a trustfulness which can cast its burden of anxiety on the Lord.

2. Again, in an age like the present, many minds will be tried by the long-continued pressure of difficulties connected with the Church's faith. Very often this comes from a mere mistake as to what that faith really is; the caricature has been taken for the likeness; Christianity has been weighted with this or that proposition which is "plainly contradictory to what the light of nature teaches us of God,"[1] but for which Christianity, as the Church holds it, is not responsible;[2] and this has too often been the stone over which men have stumbled into passionate unbelief. Or questions are raised about the sufficiency of human probation, or the incompleteness of certain kinds of evidence, or the position to be assigned to certain parts of the Old Testament in the face of modern criticism. Or science is quoted as imperiously prohibiting religious conceptions which were once deemed tenable, as putting out of court those ideas of creation and providence, of the Fall, and of miracles, without which "traditional" Christianity comes to nought. These are sore troubles to many who have no wish at all to disbelieve. The

[1] Butler, Analogy, ii. c. 3.

[2] Cp. Aubrey Moore, Lect. Hist. Reform. p. 503.

path of faith is the one which they would fain follow without straying; but a mist hangs over it; they do not see where to step; they long for light, and still the dimness remains. What should be said to them? That if there be a living God, the truths which come from Him must needs be fraught with mystery,[1] and must touch a man's nature very closely, so that his faculty for appreciating them may be affected by his condition of will and heart. And further, the doubter's wisdom is to take firm hold of such truths as he *can* apprehend, and use them as a stepping-stone. If he believes in God, let that august and far-reaching *Credo* be allowed to plead for those doctrines which depend upon it, and which do but bring out the effective reality of the relations between such a Being and moral creatures. If he cannot yet satisfy himself about Theism, let him attend to the witness of his own inward nature, and believe at least adequately in himself, as a spiritual being, possessing a moral personality: by degrees his eyes will become stronger. Or, to take two other instances, if the question relates to our Lord's

[1] Cp. Tertullian adv. Marc. ii. 2, on Rom. xi. 33. That text has been sometimes strained (as by Augustine) to silence objections which had a moral basis; but it represents the truth that "a God completely understood would be no God at all." Cp. S. Hil. de Trin. ii. 6.

Divinity, let him fix his thoughts on our Lord's human character in connection with the claims which He made for Himself:[1] or, if sacramental ideas present a difficulty, let him wait until he can take them as illuminated by the Holy Incarnation considered as a central and life-giving fact. Above all, let him try the method so earnestly commended to all inquirers by Him who said, "If any one has a will to do the Father's will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I am speaking of myself."[2]

3. And yet once more, to come still closer home. A regular use of the means of grace is not always effectual in preserving the soul from old temptations. A young person looks forward to Confirmation or first Communion, and finds that his devout feelings are not stirred as he expected; or, afterwards, he hopes for much help from a Lent or an Easter, and when they are over they seem to have done him but little good: "Harvest is past, summer is ended, and we are not saved."[3] Distractions recur after years of diligent praying; flashes of hot temper, or memories of evil words, are not excluded by services or Com-

[1] Liddon, Bamp. Lect. pp. 195–208; Easter Sermons, ii. 261–268; Christmastide Serm. p. 35; cp. Gore, Bamp. Lect. p. 16.

[2] John vii. 17.

[3] Jer. viii. 20.

munions; then comes a temptation to think that religion has failed to do what one was told to hope from it; and if that thought is admitted, a crash is impending. How can a soul be drawn back from the verge of such a precipice? The best advice to be given is, "Wait on the Lord. His ear is not heavy, His eye is not averted." As a Christian poet says well—

> "Enclosed doth lie
> In each 'Come, Lord,' an 'Here am I.'" [1]

Go on with your plain duties as heartily and faithfully as possible; do what you can do, and wait for grace to help you to do what now you cannot. Accept slowness of spiritual improvement, if it schools you in humility. Renew your intention of being strictly loyal towards God. Go to Him yet oftener, claim His promised help still more importunately; do not intermit your prayers because you cannot, as it were, enjoy them; remember that there may be real fervour without any sensible warmth of emotion, if only a loyal intention can be sustained.[2] Look more closely into yourself, to see whether something lurks there which needs to be cleared out, whether penitence cannot find more work to do; be more than ever

[1] Trench, Poems from Eastern Sources, p. 70.
[2] Imitation of Christ, b. ii. c. 9.

careful to avoid occasions of sin, in regard not only to acts, but to casual words and thoughts unspoken; and then be sure that if He whom you wish to serve still keeps you waiting for His comfort, He will not keep you waiting for His mercy. Indeed the mercy may come in fuller form because of the perseverance in asking which a seeming delay has called forth. "Whenever," says Augustine, "He is somewhat slow in giving, He is not denying but enhancing His gifts. God keeps for you that which He does not will to give you speedily, that you, too, may learn to have a great desire for great things. . . . He defers what he wills to give, that you may the more earnestly desire it because it is thus deferred."[1] At last comes the rich all-satisfying boon: "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

"Ye have need of patience," says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews,[2] and he at once adds the reason; patience is a condition of the attainment of God's "promise" after having "done His will." Our Lord Himself said to His disciples, "In your patience ye shall win," or "gain possession of, your souls;"[3] and these deep words may well include in their scope not only our ultimate salvation, but a

[1] St. Augustine, Sermons 61 and 105. [2] Heb. x. 36.
[3] Luke xxi. 19.

permanent blessing for the dutiful soul, beyond the support which it needs for its trial-hour. He who waits patiently on God will derive from the very pain of his suspense fresh supplies of moral and spiritual vitality; he secures, more and more thoroughly, the possession of his inner being; he becomes a truer man; he fits himself so much the better for the consummation which will more than compensate for any "deferring of hope" or "tarrying of visions" in this world, when he will join with all Saints in the exultant cry of welcome, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He *has* saved us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."[1]

[1] Cp. Isa. xxv. 9.

SERMON XI.

THE SERVICE OF GOD.

"His servants shall serve Him."—Rev. xxii. 3.

The idea of the service of God is set before us in several of our collects. We acknowledge in one, that "of His only gift it cometh that His faithful people do unto Him true and laudable service;" in another, that He has "constituted the services" both "of angels and of men in a wonderful order;" in others, we ask that "every member of the Church, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve Him;" that "His faithful people may serve Him with a quiet mind;" that "His Church may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness," "may be devoutly given to serve Him in all good works;"[1] and every morning, in words so familiar that perhaps we miss part of their significance, we declare our belief that "His service is perfect freedom;"—a free rendering,

[1] In the last two collects referred to, "serve" has been substituted for "devotione" and "devota" in the original.

excellent in its kind, of the more pointed and vivid original, "whom to serve is to reign."

It is not, then, the Church's fault if the obligation thus indicated is not deeply impressed upon the minds of her children. And yet there is not a little in the temper of our day which resists the thought that God is a Master. Many people more or less consciously recoil from the assertion of a claim so imperative as is necessarily involved in such a conception of the Supreme. Some absolutely reject religion on this account: they think, or speak as if they thought, that their independence would be compromised, their dignity insulted, by the recognition of a Sovereign in heaven, no less than by subjection to a master on earth; perhaps they go so far as to say that the very notion of a God claiming to have dominion over man's whole being is an invention of the governing orders, a piece of the machinery devised by their class-selfishness for the obvious purpose of "keeping the people down." Others, who cannot dispense with religion altogether, endeavour, as far as possible, to keep the idea of Divine Sovereignty in the background. Perhaps they may in part be under the influence of a recoil from one-sided and repellent views of that Sovereignty, which were a stumbling-block to believers in the

Divine moral perfection. But the reaction must be worse than extravagant which leads men to emphasize "the Fatherhood of God" by detaching from it, in effect, the idea of paternal authority; as if there were no significance in the words of the last prophet, "If I be a Father, where is Mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is My fear?" It has been truly said that "it is possible for men to desire moral and spiritual excellence, and yet to ignore" God's right to be obeyed; to "think of Him as having a fulness of moral and spiritual life, from which they may receive inspiration and strength, but" to "do no homage to His awful sovereignty." "The awe with which they would regard Him, if they had discovered that to violate the eternal law of righteousness is to sin against Him, they have never felt."[1] Or we may describe their position of mind by observing that they do not accept the idea of responsibility to Him for all their thoughts, words, and actions. It is burdensome, it is oppressive, it interferes with their freedom; it is, so to speak, exasperating.[2] If they cannot be religious without it, they will not be religious at all.

"Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away

[1] Dale, The Atonement, p. 349.

[2] Cp. the Pagan in Minucius Felix, ch. 10.

their cords from us." So, in all ages, rises up, in speech or in thought, the voice of revolt against the Eternal Monarchy,—but in vain: "He that dwelleth in heaven," says the Psalmist very boldly, "shall laugh them to scorn." He lives, He reigns, He judges: if He exists at all, He exists as Lord: to explain away, to minimise His rights over us, His urgent, exacting, indispensable claim on the allegiance and obedience of His moral creatures, from the highest Archangel to the youngest child who can be taught that God sees him,—this is but atheism hardly caring to disguise itself. Given the idea of a living God, and the conviction that we are bound to serve Him follows; and Scripture does but emphasize the conclusion which natural reason forces upon all serious Theists. "I am Thy servant" is the burden of all that intercourse between the human soul and its God which pervades and vitalises the Psalter: and the prophet's language about "the Lord's Servant," passes beyond an "idealized Israel" to its fulfilment in the obedience completed on the Cross. And although the Gospel is a "law of liberty," yet no delusive spirit from the pit ever uttered a deeper falsehood than that which could confound liberty with license, or deny that moral law is involved in the relations between men and a moral God. When St. Paul says that he is

"dead to the law,"[1] he is contradicting the notion that "legal obedience" was a title to justification. When he says that we are "not under the law,"[2] he is contrasting "the letter that killeth," the system of prohibitive precepts, producing at best a loveless obedience, and often provoking direct rebellion, with "the spirit that giveth life" by infusing grace, and enkindling a loyal devotion. When he says that "the law is not made for a righteous man,"[3] he means that it does not need to address him in the tone in which it addresses the wicked, for he is already by conviction and in purpose on its side. The Apostle repeatedly intimates that God's moral law is still to be the rule of Christian conduct; he speaks of the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and of our "fulfilling the requirement of the law,"[4] very much as St. James speaks of the "royal law of liberty," and as St. John identifies sin with "lawlessness." Furthermore, the Gospel reveals a new and special ground of the obligation of God's service; He has acquired a supernatural right over us in virtue of the fact of our redemption. If we have been bought, in the Scriptural imagery, at no

[1] Gal. ii. 19. [2] Gal. v. 18; Rom. vi. 14.
[3] 1 Tim. i. 9.
[4] Rom. viii. 2–4. Cp. Sadler on Justification, p. 12.

less a price than the blood of God's own Son, it follows that "we are not our own:" we cannot be "without law to God," we must be "under law to Christ."[1] If we call Him Saviour, we must also call Him King: we must not pick and choose among the elements of the Gospel, and cast aside such parts of it as may press too hardly on our own craving to have our own way. Even when, in some most "comfortable words," He bids us to come unto Him, and promises rest and relief from a heavy load, it is on the condition of taking upon us, instead, His easy yoke and light burden. Two phrases are employed in the New Testament in order to impress this thought upon us. In some passages, a word is used which originally represented the condition of a hired servant, as when St. Paul speaks of the God whose he is and whom he "serves," or when he professes that he "serves God in his spirit" or "in a pure conscience;"—or when the Epistle to the Hebrews describes the Christian conscience as "cleansed by the blood of Christ, from dead works, to serve the living God."[2] But as if this term were not strong enough to stand alone, the relation between a bondservant or slave, and a master whose rights over him were

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 19; ix. 21.

[2] *Λατρεύω.* Acts xxvii. 23; Rom. i. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3; Heb. ix. 14.

absolute, — a relation which Christianity was to undermine, but which for the time was suffered to exist,—is utilised, so to speak, for the purpose of enforcing this great lesson. Four times does St. Paul, himself the Apostle, as he is called, of spiritual freedom, adopt the title of "a slave of God" or of "Christ:" a title used also by St. Peter, by St. John, by St. James, and by St. Jude.[1] We find St. Paul exhorting Christian slaves to carry into their whole routine of obedience to earthly lords the sense of duty to "the Lord Christ," and pressing upon earthly lords, in turn, the fact too that they are subject to the self-same Lord in heaven.[2] We are still bond-servants, he says, though not in the old sense of Jewish legalism: our members must be presented as "slaves to righteousness:" to be "made free from sin" is to become, in a fuller sense, "enslaved to God."[3] It is remarkable, too, that in the text both phrases are combined: "His slaves shall do Him service for wages."

Do we mentally shrink back from the austerity of this language? Do we fancy that it makes our religion servile,—that if Apostles used it in their

[1] Δοῦλος. Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 10; Phil. i. 1; Tit. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1; Rev. i. 1; James i. 1; Jude 1.

[2] Eph. vi. 5–9; Col. iii. 22–iv. 1.

[3] Rom. vi. 19, 22.

own time, we need not treat it as symbolizing a permanent truth,—that it is, in fact, a surviving fragment of Judaism, inconsistent with the higher Apostolic affirmation, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"? Do we plead, so to speak, that our Lord has promised us the truest freedom as the result of an effective knowledge of the truth; and that, on the last evening of His earthly ministry, He said to His faithful eleven, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends"? Well, my brethren, this was His gracious condescension, assuring them that their relation to Him was to be one of affectionate confidence. Blessed be His name, He does not keep us at arm's length: He does not treat us coldly, sternly, magisterially: we are to be "willing," freewill offerings, "in the day of His power." We are to be made "sons" in Him, the true and Only-begotten Son, and so to be "free indeed:" His service is to be, in a most true sense, perfect freedom, or even a true royalty: but it must needs be service, if He is what He is, if we are what we are. Take just one noble and beautiful instance of the combination of obedience and love, of service and joyfulness, in him who had apparently been consecrated to the episcopate by St. John,[1] and who,

[1] Cp. Bp. Lightfoot, Apost. Fath. II. i. 425.

when invited to save his life by uttering some form of renunciation of Christ, answered, "Eighty-six years have I been His servant, and He has done me no wrong: how, then, can I revile my King who saved me?"[1]

We took our text from a passage in which St. John in dwelling on the future blessedness of those who live and die in the obedience of that King, in reliance on that Saviour. He is looking "in the Spirit" at things too glorious for expression, which he depicts under the imagery of the Heavenly Jerusalem: he sees the street of gold, the gates of pearl, the jewelled foundations, the glory which supersedes all sunlight, the crystal river of life, the tree of the healing leaves. "There shall be no more curse," he breaks out triumphantly; "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein; and His servants shall do Him service, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads." As now, in the heavenly world, the angels that behold the face of the Father account it their highest glory to be "His ministers who do His will," who are perpetually active as instruments of His purposes,—in nature, we may reverently believe, as well as in grace,—as they call themselves "fellow-servants of all who keep the

[1] For St. Polycarp's martyrdom, see Euseb. iv. 15.

testimony of Jesus,"[1]—what else could we expect but that those who, being "counted worthy to attain that world, become equal to angels,"[2] should retain for ever one special characteristic of the angels' life in its glory and its blessedness, by doing God service in ways at present inconceivable?

Let us keep this prospect before us: it will brighten and elevate the homeliest forms of every-day duty, by bringing them under the obligation of personal service to a most equitable and divinely generous Lord. We can do anything that is good and innocent, and everything that is part of our daily work, as unto Him. Yes, and all helpful "service of men" will find fresh motive-force in the service of their and our Saviour. We shall be in a true sense serving Him when we are serving our fellow men in Him and for His sake. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is the question which, honestly put, will never fail of an intelligible answer; and to act upon that answer will be a step towards the majestic luminous height on which they stand who "serve Him" and who "reign with Him." We were made to be His servants; it is our wisdom to accept the situation, to esteem the bond thus laid upon us as our highest privilege, as the condition of our attainment of the

[1] Rev. xix. 10; cp. xxii. 9. [2] Luke xx. 35, 36.

end and crown of our being. It will give meaning and dignity to all the details of life; it will keep all pessimism at a distance; it will preserve us from waste of time, waste of interest, waste of energy, waste of affection. It will answer, as no other view of life will ever answer, in the long run. A Queen of France once said to a great statesman-Cardinal, whom she regarded as having deeply injured her, "God does not pay at the end of each week, but when His time comes He *does* pay." If this is true of His righteous punishments, it is still more true of what He deigns to give as His rewards.

SERMON XII.

HOPE.

"Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you."—1 PET. i. 13.

Is there, in this first Epistle of St. Peter, any one characteristic feature, any dominant and pervading idea, such as we find in some of St. Paul's epistles,—the principle of justification, for instance, in two, and, in a third, the Second Advent? I think we may answer this question in the affirmative. As we read the Epistle and drink in its spirit, we become aware of something that lifts and enkindles; it is as if we were inhaling sea-air, were basking in the glow of a genial warmth. The pulse of Christian heartiness and confidence beats full and strong throughout the five short chapters: they breathe a spirit of glad energy; they flash with the brilliance of what their anthor, in one fervid outburst, describes as God's own "marvellous light;" in a word, they are instinct with a dominant hopefulness, which gives to the whole letter its peculiar force and charm.

We see here an instance of that beautiful method in the Divine education of humanity whereby nature, so to speak, is made the basis on which a diviner fabric is to rise; for God knows how to deal with each form of character and temperament, and to bring out its special aptitudes for His glory. The Peter of the Gospels was of an eager, sanguine disposition; and his hopefulness, while it was yet unchastened, repeatedly outran his real strength. The Pentecostal fire descends upon him, and he continues to be the same man, with the same basis and structure of character, very unlike that of John, or of Paul afterwards; but there has passed over him a refining and invigorating touch. He has become more truly a Peter; he has drawn strength from the Rock of Ages. His ardour is sobered; it conforms to a rule which keeps it healthful; the impulsive forgetfulness of difficulty, the almost boyish contempt of danger, which had formerly betrayed him into weakness or collapse, has been changed into that grace which is born of "probation,"[1]—that is, which results from a testing and approval of moral qualities,—and to which he refers, when we might rather have expected him to speak of faith, as a hope dwelling "in" Christians,

[1] Rom. v. 4.

a hope that "lives" through the fact of Christ's resurrection,—a hope, as in the text, that completes itself by dwelling persistently on the bounty which is "being borne in upon" the soul, and will be fully appropriated in the day of Christ's appearing,—the gift, that is, of eternal life in Him. St. Peter is thus "the Apostle of hope."[1]

To speak of hope at all is to speak of what we instinctively recognise as a condition of fruitful effort, of anything like success or satisfaction, even in the affairs of ordinary life. It has been called "the nerve, the backbone of all true life."[2] To take hope from a man is to paralyze him morally; if he lives on in so dreary a condition, we think of him as surviving himself. It is needless to dwell on a point so clear; but simply to advert to it is to illustrate the affinity between the testimony of nature, and the teaching of that Gospel which has canonized hope as the second of its principal virtues. The stress which Scripture lays on true religious hope is emphasized by the stern distinctness with which it brands the counterfeits, the hopes which are ignorant or presumptuous, and therefore delusive, and therefore destructive,—like "broken reeds" which "pierce the hand" that leans on them, like "refuges of lies"

[1] Dale, The Atonement, p. 147. [2] Liddon, Advent Sermons, i. 257.

which are swept away by the hailstorm, like the "vain things" of heathen idolatry "which could not profit nor deliver, for they were vain." Such hopes, falsely so called, are ever reappearing in new forms in accordance with individual faults or weaknesses, or with the moral condition of the time. For instance, men sometimes persuade themselves that they can be justified by mere personal assurance; that pious feeling will suffice without obedience, or that social virtue will serve instead of worship; that they can stop when they please in a course of self-indulgence, or be sure of repenting when they are past enjoying sin. Or, in regard to public interests, men expect that mere knowledge will purify character, that natural resources will perfect man's moral education. The teaching of Scripture may preserve us from such illusions, by helping us to distinguish and appreciate some three characteristics of that hope which Apostles would recognise as true.

1. First, then, Christian hope, as St. Peter tells us, is seated "in God:" it is, as it has been called, one of the triad of virtues specifically "theological;" it takes its stand on Divine revelation, it looks on to the attainment of Divine promises. It draws its life-blood from no mere surmise as to what is possible for humanity, in the race at large or in the individual,

but from the manifestation of Divine truth and goodness in the Incarnate, whom St. Paul, in one passage, calls "our hope,"[1] because our hope is grounded on Him and centred in Him. St. Paul, indeed, cannot think of hope without thinking of Christ; it is characteristic of him that the object of his "earnest expectation and hope" should be the glorification of Christ in his body, whether by life or by death.[2] So he elsewhere speaks of Christians as having been "called in one hope" which grows out "of their calling," which derives all its force and charm from the act of grace that brought them into that sacred and supernatural fellowship. Christian hope, being rooted in faith, is, like faith, vivid, positive, and definite; it is, as St. Peter calls it, "living," because it is a fruit of the resurrection-life of Jesus; it gazes with calm trustful eyes, onward and still onward, into a future literally boundless, as illuminated by the Person and the work of the one everlasting Redeemer; it is a "hope of eternal life," as based on Him. Because we trust Him, or, in other words, the Father speaking through Him, therefore we cherish this radiant, vigorous expectation that He will be as good as His word, that His "promises are Yea and Amen;" and this assurance, this "helmet-like

[1] 1 Tim. i. 1. [2] Phil. i. 20.

hope of salvation," carries with it a confidence as to what man may obtain, and what he may become, in Christ, and therefore a determination not to be "borne down and cowed by evil,"[1] to cultivate a religious courage, befitting those who know that they are on the side that ultimately must triumph, and who accordingly can look beyond reverses, can make "imagination the ally and support of faith," can see God's promises to be full of "light and reality," and this, because they are stayed by the "anchor, sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil."[2]

2. This leads us to observe that a hope which is thus essentially religious, thus Christian from the root upwards, and impossible except on the terms of Christian belief, is strong enough to face all facts, even such as are unwelcome or austere. The "Apostle of hope" will not let his readers dwell in a fool's paradise: he reminds them that they are "strangers and pilgrims;" he speaks of "manifold" trials as present, of "fiery" trials as imminent; and, seven times at least, of "sufferings" to be faced and borne by servants of the Crucified, expressly on the score of their faith. Life must, after all, be taken seriously; the hope which is a Christian's privilege

[1] Church, Advent Sermons, p. 96. [2] Heb. vi. 19.

involves a wakeful collectedness of mind; when trial comes, we are not to say, "It is more than we bargained for," but rather, "We were duly forewarned." Certainly there will be temptations to unhopefulness; there must be the discipline of hopes deferred, of successes marred, of apparent defeats and disappointments, of much that might tempt impatience to despair. A hope thus trained, while resting on august realities, is strong because it is not fanciful; it has realised the conditions of Christian life, as an uphill march, a long and arduous campaign; it can afford to take full account of the gravest requirements of His service, who bids no one follow save where He Himself has trod; it does not dream of being exempt from anxieties, but it "casts" the whole weight of them on "the strong hand" of that good Father who has proved so well how much He "careth for us." It says, in the words dear to many Church people,—

"And now we watch and struggle,
And now we live in hope,
And Sion in her anguish
With Babylon must cope;
But He whom now we trust in
Shall then be seen and known,
And they that know and see Him
Shall have Him for their own." [1]

[1] Neale's translation from Bernard of Cluny.

3. And once again, true "hope is a great instrument of moral and spiritual discipline."[1] When St. Peter is about to say, "make your hope perfect," he prefaces it with a call to sustained effort: we are to "gird up the loins of our mind." It is remarkable also that St. Paul does not merely exhort us to cherish hope, but to see that our hope is of the right kind, that it is such as is secured through endurance, and endurance as fortified by the encouragement, the quickening impulse to Christian exertion, which the pages of Scripture will supply.[2] It is of the Old Testament that, in the passage referred to, he says, it is "written for our instruction," and then he shows how practical is his idea of instruction: the upshot of those biblical lessons is to be a hope religious in its essence, associated with the power of the Holy Spirit. It is as if he had said, "The further you advance in the spiritual life, the more will you need of strength to resist temptation, or to bear outward trials bravely, brightly, and patiently; and the more you can do this, the more of true hope will you acquire." Thus we see that the hope which maketh not ashamed is always humble and always active. It remembers the terms of its existence: "We are made partakers of Christ, *if* we hold the beginning

[1] Church, Adv. Serm. p. 97. [2] Rom. xv. 4.

of our confidence steadfast unto the end." We may hope to attain blessedness, *if*—but only if—we use grace, and persevere in fidelity. We are not to fancy that "once in grace" means "always in grace:" while there is life there will be hope, but while there is life there must be fear. So practical is this great quality, so powerful as a stimulus to work in the lines marked out by Him who assigns all tasks, and rewards all faithful endeavours: the Christian who lives in the power of this motive will not waste time in a mere sentimental pietism which carries no one over any fresh ground, but will rather make haste to "fix" devout "feelings into habits,"[1] and to use every specially vivid glimpse of future blessedness as a new incentive for present obedience, a refreshing foretaste to speed him on his way. Thus, as St. Paul says, we are "saved by hope." Will it, indeed, be said that religious hope is a selfish motive, by which Christianity would bribe us to good behaviour?[2]

[1] Newman, Sermons, i. 185.

[2] Readers of Cardinal Newman's "Dream of Gerontius" will remember who are made to say:—

> "Saint though he be, Ha! Ha!
> From shrewd good sense
> He'll slave for hire,
> And does but aspire
> To the heaven above
> With sordid aim,
> And not from love."

This superfine attempt to disparage the Gospel ethics as lower in tone than the morality of a virtuous unbeliever might deservedly be met, as it has been met, with the plain-spoken question, "whether it is well to talk such cant." But let us observe that, first, the belief in a future recompense of good conduct is itself of a moral nature, for it grows out of the assurance that, in the long run, goodness, as such, will answer, and that evil, as such, will not;[1] an assurance which cannot be shared by those who look for no life beyond this present scene of moral difficulties and enigmas. If we do look for such a life, it must be with earnest expectation, as of those who "stretch forth their heads" to catch the first sight of a coming object; and this attitude of expectancy will not be purely passive, it will tell on our present conduct. And further, as Bishop Butler teaches us,[2] there is a reasonable self-love, a "regard to our own chief interest, which is a just and natural principle of action;" and a religious man knows that his chief interest is what Christ calls the salvation of his soul. If we believe that the soul has to be saved, it is simply impossible not to

[1] Bagehot, Literary Studies, ii. 391. Cp. Mozley, University Sermons, p. 75.

[2] Analogy, part i c. 5.

aim at salvation, which is the supreme good of the true self. But what is salvation? It is inseparable from the perpetual "enjoyment," as St. Augustine would say,[1] of God. There is no such idea in the mind of an instructed Christian as a heaven apart from that Presence into which nothing defiled can enter: the very notion of salvation, as an object of hope, involves that entire sanctification of the whole being which we are above all things bound to long for, and the attainment of which will be our moral consummation. Christianity is not responsible for any less spiritual conception of God's promises: we may, it is true, need time to appreciate their significance; but this, and nothing less, is what Christ means us to aim at; in this, and nothing short of it, our hope is to find its satisfaction. Listen for a moment to him whose eagle-eyed soul could look so clearly into the far-off splendours: "We shall see Him as He is, and every one who has this hope fixed on Him is ever purifying himself, even as He is pure."[2]

It is an age in which, on the one hand, many hopes of a purely secular kind are current, which look to the future "progress" of a de-christianised humanity, and which exact from those who cherish them a very considerable measure of faith; while, on the other

[1] De Doctr. Chr. i. 4, 5.

[2] 1 John iii. 2, 3.

hand, in proportion to the abandonment of faith, a hopeless pessimism has cast its shadow of death over thousands of minds, and made life seem "not worth living." Amid these opposite errors let us hold fast to the pure and serious hopes which have the Faith for their ground and warrant, which neither undervalue the blessings of this life, nor exaggerate its pains and sorrows, while they speed on far beyond its close to a solution of its dark problems, a readjustment of its bewildering anomalies, and a crown of all its fore-appointed work. When the "cloudy day" hangs heavily over us,—when the depression which is a disguised faithlessness makes us feel, as we say, "good for nothing,"—when interests lose their savour, and even prayers become a weariness,—let us gather up our spiritual forces for one effort, repeat with earnestness the final clause of the Creed, and make an act of hope, thus: "O my God, trusting in Thy mercy, and in the Passion and merits of Thy beloved Son, I hope to be enabled to persevere in Thy service, and to attain the good things which Thou hast prepared for those that love Thee: preserve and increase this hope in my soul." The thought, "One day, if I can but persevere, I shall see God, and be happy for ever, with all who are His, in Him," is a staff which we may grasp, and by help of which

we may go forward until we reach the brink of the "deep river," and catch some "reflection of the sunbeams upon the city that is pure gold."[1] It might console us, and helpfully inspirit us, if, at some time of solemnising quiet,—let us say, on a Sunday night,—we would read the last two chapters of the New Testament, and then, with humble faith, in the name of Christ, *look forward.*

[1] Pilgrim's Progress, part i.

SERMON XIII.

LOVE FOR GOD'S COMMANDS.

"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."—1 JOHN v. 3.

IF any one would set himself to study the collects of the Trinity season as a series, to trace out the Scriptural sources of their language, and endeavour thus to enrich his own conception of vital Christianity, and to gain a fuller sense of the connection between the Christian scheme of doctrine and the Christian standard of morals, he would be far from wasting his time. The thought may be illustrated from the very ancient[1] and very beautiful collect which belongs to the fourteenth week after Trinity. It asks for an increase of the three great religious virtues, which St. Paul describes as "abiding," as having an intrinsic permanent value in contrast with

[1] In the "Leonine" Sacramentary. Muratori, Lit. Rom. Vet., i. p. 374.

the temporary purpose of those brilliant endowments which he had called the gifts of "knowledge," of "prophecy" and of "tongues." And then, in truly Pauline fashion, it dwells upon the special pre-eminence of charity or love, in its reference to God Himself and to His law. "And that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command;" as if to say, It is unreal to ask for an increase of the grace of love, unless we desire to apply it to God's law of duty, and so to find that His commandments, as embraced by the rectified affections, are "not grievous," literally, not "heavy," but in truth a "gentle" yoke. This is one point which the collect before us has in common with the collect for the fourth Sunday after Easter, "Grant unto Thy people that they may love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise." Both collects, in effect, remind us that obedience, to be acceptable, must be free, cordial, and affectionate; that it will not suffice to obey in a servile spirit, that our will must be really on the side of our duty. But whereas the latter collect simply combines, as co-ordinate, the two acts of loving what God commands and desiring what He promises, the collect before us exhibits the close dependent relation in which the attainment of what is promised stands

to the love of what is commanded; the latter being, in fact, a necessary condition of the former, necessary in the strictest sense of the term. Heaven is promised to love, and to love as a principle of action,—to love as appreciating the infinite beauty of God's will, and thus as directed towards Himself, according to that fragment of a sentence which St. Paul quotes with "As it is written," and which is probably a verse in the sixty-fourth chapter of Isaiah as adapted to primitive Christian use;[1] "What eye saw not and ear heard not, and heart" or mind "received not, those things which God prepared for them that love Him," for them and for no others. But it is not enough to say that heaven is promised to holy love. It *is* only heaven to such love; and here we may well observe how poor and ignoble, how carnal, how essentially immoral, are the notions which are sometimes carelessly taken for granted—for they cannot be deliberately entertained—about salvation.[2]

People talk of "going to heaven" as if admission to future happiness had nothing to do with the bent and tone of their minds, of their inward being, here

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9. The rhythm seems to indicate this.

[2] Christian Year, Sixth Sunday after Epiphany:

"What is the heaven we idly dream?
The self-deceiver's dreary theme."

on earth. But salvation is the consummation of that eternal life which begins for Christ's true servants in this world, according to His own saying, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath eternal life;" and as St. John says in his first epistle, "He that hath the Son hath life." But the essence of eternal life is union with Him who is the Eternal and is the Life. To possess it, in however imperfect a measure, is to be in moral "fellowship" with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. There is nothing arbitrary in the Divine awards; alike for weal and for woe, there is a true continuity between a man's character, as formed and settled in this world, and the portion assigned to him in the next. Perdition is no vindictive infliction for bygone evil, but the inevitable, one might say the natural result[1] of obdurate persistency in evil, or, as it has been expressed, of "a free will self-fixed in obstinate refusal of God, and *therefore* necessarily left to itself;" and salvation must similarly be the complete development of a moral and spiritual condition which may be described as the renewal of the soul, by the joint operation of grace on the one hand, and of responsiveness, with the aid of grace, on the other; which condition must, at any rate, have been

[1] Cf. St. Irenæus, v. 27. 2; and Butler, Analogy, ii. c. 5. s. 2.

inaugurated if the soul is to depart in what is called the state of grace. In short, we must be qualified for salvation if we would be saved. In the words of a saintly teacher,[1] "If we could imagine what is impossible, a transference of Satan, as he is, to heaven, I suppose he would try to throw himself out of it; there could be no more terrible hell for him than a heaven full of love, which he could not enjoy nor return." And in the very first of a famous series of "Parochial Sermons" occur such words as the following: "If a man without religion (supposing it possible) were admitted into heaven, he would sustain a great disappointment. . . . Nay, I will venture to say more than this . . . if we wished to imagine a punishment for an unholy, reprobate soul, we perhaps could not fancy a greater than to summon it to heaven. Heaven would be hell to an irreligious man. He would know that the Eternal Eye was ever upon him; and that eye of holiness, which is joy and life to holy creatures, would seem to him an eye of wrath and punishment."[2] It stands to reason, if we think of it, that no human being whose will was averse to God's will could be at home in the very sanctuary of His immediate presence.

[1] Dr. Pusey. The writer heard him say this in 1878.

[2] Newman, Sermons, i. 5–8.

If, therefore, we desire to attain the pleasures which are at His right hand, we must cultivate those faculties which will enable us to appreciate them; we must endeavour to lead such a life as will join on congenially with the life of the purified and the saved. Yet how many overlook a necessity which has its root in the very nature of things, and drift on as if, when they died, all their tastes, aims, wishes, affections, were to be radically altered at a stroke, they themselves remaining passive! If they would but think for a moment, they would see the extravagance of such an expectation; they would feel that no one could expect to live in heaven who had not, to some real extent, been already breathing its air.

And how is this to be done? The collect replies, By loving what God commands; that is, by putting our wills into a line with His will, by giving Him our hearts, by sympathizing, if we may so speak, with His intentions towards us and for us. Thus to love what He commands is accepted by Him as, in substance, love for Himself. "This," says the Apostle of holy love, "is the love of God," that is, love for God, "that we keep his commandments," meaning, obviously, that we strive heartily to keep them. A famous French king is said to have remarked to a

bishop, "I never heard before that, in order to forgiveness of sins, one must have love for God." He was indeed very ignorant of his Bible; but many Englishmen with Bibles at hand are in no position to judge Louis XIV. Perhaps they ask whether anything like a fervent glow of devotion is necessary to constitute the love which God requires. The answer is, that love for God is in the first place to be attained by setting our hearts on pleasing Him by obedience. Here is, for many of us, a lesson sufficiently difficult. Persons can easily admit that, as Christians, they ought to do some things, and ought to avoid some other things; that duty has, not only from a merely moral, but from a religious point of view, unquestionable claims upon them; but when the claim of God, as Master, on their obedience takes the form of an appeal as from a Father to their affections, this brings Him personally nearer than they like; they feel a chill, perhaps a recoil, or even at times a sort of repulsion. If they spoke their real minds they would say, "I am not prepared for that; it does not suit my temperament; this may be a flaw in me, a drawback or a misfortune, but I cannot help it;" and so they are tempted to assume that something short of actual love for God's commands will be sufficient in their case, until their disposition is changed with-

out any effort, and what is now difficult becomes pleasant and natural. Their lives, meantime, are more than simply correct: they do a great many right things, they keep out of the way of much that is evil; they repeat their prayers, they attend church, they may even go periodically to Communion, but all as a matter of obligation, a task-work with no element of pleasure. What they hear or read about a personal regard for God's will as such, a desire to be on filial terms with Him, a habit of asking in each question of conduct, "What will best please my Father?" is to them like a language which they have never learned, and see no occasion for acquiring. In effect, they assume that such things may be left to persons of a more "mystical" or a more "emotional" turn; as if love for God were like a warm imagination, a keen sense of beauty in art or nature, an ear for music, or a taste for poetry. If any here present have to confess to themselves that this, on the whole, represents their own condition, let them ponder what is involved in being Christians and not Jews. A grave responsibility is attached to the blessing which belongs to those who see the things that we see, and that prophets and righteous men desired to see, but saw not. By comparison with the position of the baptized, they were rather servants than sons; and

yet many of them, with so much less advantage, did really attain to a genuine unaffected love for God's commands as made known, and therein for Himself as revealed, under the old covenant. Assuredly not a few verses in the Psalter, particularly in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, may well put to shame many easy-going Christians. "O what love have I unto Thy law!" it "is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver:" "I love Thy commandments above gold and precious stone:" "my delight shall be in Thy statutes:" "in Thy law is my delight." The pious Israelite, who was not to be "made perfect," in spiritual knowledge or happiness, "without us," could say such words, and mean what he said; why do we fall so far below him?—we, the inheritors of a better covenant, under which is fulfilled the prophecy that God would "put His law into men's hearts and write it in their minds," so that it should not be a mere external mandate, provoking resistance by tones of prohibitory menace, and thus, in St. Paul's strong phrases, "a letter that killeth" and "worketh wrath," but rather a breath of "the Spirit that giveth life," an appeal to the heart and will, bringing home the presence and effectual aid of the Holy "Supporter,"[1] unfolding God's love as expressed in His

[1] Παράκλητος in John xiv. seems to imply this.

commands, and awakening a responsive love which will embrace those commands with the energy of affectionate devotion. The contrast indicated by St. Paul, and elaborately worked out by St. Augustine,[1] is well set forth by a Christian poet of the middle ages:[2]—

> "The law that once through darkness came,
> With trumpet-clang and darting flame,
> Could plunge a host in dread:
> 'Twas left for grace to kindle love,
> When that sweet 'unction from above'
> On chosen souls was shed."

But let us hope that, on the whole, we can really wish to be drawn towards religion, and to pray with sincerity, if not with ardour, "Make us to love what Thou dost command." This, at least, is a good beginning; it is something to work upon; we can go on to consider what methods can be taken with the best hope of attaining our object. It will be found that if faith and hope are subordinate to love in its highest aspect, what helps to the increase of love is the increase of faith and hope; that persons can more easily open their hearts to the beauty and lovableness of "the law of the Spirit of life," when they can absolutely trust God as meaning nothing but good for them, and as having "written large His meaning" in

[1] De Spiritu et Littera, 6, 20, 32, etc.: de Grat. Chr. 9; c. duas Ep. Pelag. iii. 2, all referring to 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[2] Adam of St. Victor; see Trench, Sacred Latin Poetry, p. 158.

the life and death of His Son, and when they can really expect Him to make some good out of themselves personally, to "carry on a good work in" them, and, if they will permit Him, to complete it. A pious naval officer,[1] dying of a poisonous spear-wound, said to his ship's company, "The love which God Himself will give you, if you trust Him, is very great; it will guide all your goings and doings."

Again, let us think of the happiness of being on the side of goodness, in the full and Christian sense of the term, as including purity, charity, justice, tenderness, truthfulness, an abiding consciousness of a Divine presence at hand, all that array of qualities which supplies so strong an evidence for the existence and the character of the All-good One, as the source whence those lucid streams go forth to water the "parched ground" of humanity. Let us at least desire and resolve to take our part with those who are striving to be good, who think it well worth their while to get their tempers sweetened, their aims straightened, their hearts purified, their faith made bright and firm; and we too shall come to feel a glow of moral enthusiasm, as having attached ourselves to a cause which deserves, and is destined, to triumph.

[1] Commodore Goodenough (1875).

And further, let us at once attempt, not to get up an excitement of devotional feeling, which is all too likely to be followed by a reaction of coldness, but to go through so many hours, or through one whole day, and then through another, and so on, in a way which we have reason to know would be approved by our Lord Jesus Christ, and reckoned as at least a sincere effort to correspond with the mind of the Father. If we make endeavours of this sort, for a succession of short periods, we shall presently find that we are becoming interested; our hearts will throw themselves more and more genuinely into the work; we shall enjoy something like a spiritual counterpart of refreshing air and cheering sunshine. It will not, to be sure, be always a fair-weather business; there will be slips and relapses, dark moments, difficult struggles; but if we give Christ our full confidence, if our habitual intention points steadily towards His will, if each failure or sin is followed by a more entire and practical repentance, we shall be led on, step after step, one step being "enough" in its time, along that "highway" in which "the wayfarer shall not err" [1] if he is honest, in the ever-brightening path of the commandments which are not grievous, and of the service which is royalty and freedom.

[1] Isa. xxxv. 8.

SERMON XIV.

INCREASE OF RELIGION.

"They go from strength to strength."—Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

THIS psalm was evidently composed as a kind of vent for the feelings of some pious Jewish worshipper, when debarred by existing circumstances from taking his place among the pilgrims who went up at one of the great annual festivals to worship together in their "holy and beautiful house." He recalls his experience of former journeys of this kind; he remembers how he had set his "heart" on that familiar highway; how even those parts of it which in themselves were dreary or unsightly had seemed to his elastic spirit like a verdant path beside a fountain; how he and his companions had gone forward hour after hour, without flagging or failing, but rather with fresh energy and self-renewing impetus, as each step brought them nearer to the "lovely tabernacle of the Lord of Hosts," to the house which must make its permanent inmates "blessed," while even to stand for a day in

its courts was better than to spend a thousand days elsewhere.

We all know the psalm as one of those which go most straight to the heart; and we feel, it may be hoped, that its signal charm consists in the contradiction which it gives to whatever might be called formalism. Why does the Psalmist long to be in the temple? Why does his soul faint for the courts of the Lord? Because it is the living God, as there especially manifested, for whom his "heart" and his flesh cry out. If he wishes, though for the present in vain, to take part in the festal worship, it is because the object of that worship, the source of all its solemn attractiveness, is his King and his God, the "sun and shield of those who walk uprightly." He is so far one in spirit, though apparently not one personally, with the author of that sadder strain in which the panting eagerness of the hart for the water-brooks is taken as an image of the soul's thirst for that same living God, its own God, the God of its very life.

This being clearly understood at the outset, we can well understand how this psalm has spoken, through so many Christian ages, to souls which appreciate the privileges of corporate religion, has commended itself to the faithful when preparing for Holy Communion, or interpreted the thoughts with which they welcomed

the Lord's own day. Yes; but it has undertones which we, perhaps, are helped to distinguish by the very fact that, as worshippers in spirit and truth, we are not required to go up periodically to some one central sanctuary, and that wherever we live, we have ordinarily ready access to the house and the altar of the Lord. This rich exuberance of devotional opportunities assists us to find in the psalm a yet deeper and broader significance. We are led to think of our whole life as a pilgrimage to the better country,[1] where the temple is constituted by the presence of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. To use an antithesis familiar to pious writers of old time, we are travellers who have not yet attained[2] our goal: we are still on the road, and must not mistake a temporary lodging-place for the home that is "very far off."[3] We may thus take the words, "Blessed is the man in whose heart are Thy ways," and, "They go from strength to strength," in connection with a whole line of Scriptural language

[1] "No wonder that in all ages men have rejoiced to find in this beautiful picture an image of the Christian life." Bishop Perowne, on the Psalms, ii. 118.

[2] "Viatores," not "comprehensores." See Phil. iii. 12: "Sequor autem si quomodo comprehendam" (Vulg.). So St. Tho. Aqu., "Comprehensionem quæ importat præsentiam finis;" Sum. Prim. Sec. q. 4, a. 3.

[3] "Ne viator, tendens ad patriam, stabulum amet pro domo sua." St. Aug. in Ps. xl. s. 5.

respecting the "way" of righteousness, of holiness, or of peace—the "path" of the just, the "ways" of the Lord; phrases which received, so to speak, their final enrichment when the Lord Incarnate described Himself as "the Way."[1] The force and fulness of meaning which thus passed into the text may be indicated by the lines of a well-known paraphrase—

> "Happy souls! their praises flow
> Even in this vale of woe:
> Waters in the desert rise,
> Manna feeds them from the skies;
> On they go from strength to strength,
> Till they reach Thy throne at length,
> At Thy feet adoring fall,
> Who hast led them safe through all."

It is for this power of spiritual advance that we ask in the collect for the seventh Sunday after Trinity, "Increase in us true religion." If we would offer this petition aright, we must, of course, have a clear conception of what we mean by Religion. For, as the words of the collect indicate, there are counterfeits which have to be distinguished from the reality. The word Religion, according to one account of its origin, implies a serious and habitual consideration of our relation to God: according to another, it witnesses for the obligations which bind us to Him.[2]

[1] Prov. xvi. 31; Isa. xxxv. 8, lix. 8, xxvi. 7; Prov. iv. 18; Ps. cxxxviii. 5; John xiv. 6.

[2] Trench prefers the former or "Ciceronian" derivation; Huls. Lect. p. 271. So Skeat, Etym. Dict. English Language.

We need not pause here to dwell on the attempts made by literary unbelief to appropriate a term so valuable because so venerable, after first scooping out of it the meaning which constitutes its power; to assume that its object may be anything vast or wonderful, which calls forth admiration, enthusiasm, or strong interest; to preach a religion of nature, a religion of humanity, a religion of patriotism, a religion of science, of culture, or of art. No doubt religion, in the proper sense, can consecrate all activities, mental or moral, which are "honourable or of good report;"[1] but it is distinct from and above them all, and cannot without mischievous sophistry be absorbed into any one of them. Its object is God—a true God, a living, personal, moral, on whom we are dependent, and with whom we can hold intercourse. A religious man is one who makes God the centre of his life; to whom "the thought of God" is indeed "the stay of his soul;"[2] who realises the truth that "wholly in the things which God has spoken and done concerning him is the life of his spirit."[3] We thus exclude from the idea of religion whatever does not go deeper than feeling, or belongs

[1] Phil. iv. 9. Σεμνὰ must mean, "which have any worth or dignity."
[2] Newman, Sermons, v. 313 ff.
[3] Isa. xxxviii. 15, 16. Cp. Delitzsch.

to mere opinion as distinct from the convictions which govern conduct. For us Christians, again, true religion involves acceptance of the revelation which we believe that God has given to us; it is the service of God in Christ, the religion of the Incarnation and of the Redemption, adopted as the true interpretation of life, assimilated by the mind, the will, and the affections, and permitted to mould the inner being. It is not too much to say that for us no other religion is possible; and while this religion has too often been over-weighted by additions to its genuine substance, it is more to our purpose in England to remember that some representations of it are popular just because they are seriously defective. One, for instance, may give full range to fervid emotion, and decline the check of solemnity and reverence; another may dwell on the benign and genial aspects of Christianity, and ignore all its admonitory sternness; another may disparage special dogmas as mere excrescences on "our common Christianity." And the religion of not a few respectable Churchgoers, although real up to a point, stops short when it ought to go forward. They recoil from religious intensity and vividness; they do not like to recognise certain elements of a full-formed Christianity, which would exact more than they are

willing to render, and would make the Divine Kingdom take up too large a space in their view of life. They may profess a conscientious objection to what would "interfere between their own souls and God;" perhaps what they really dread is the being constrained to come to close quarters with Him.

There is, again, a fashion of almost indefinite concession, which sacrifices doctrine after doctrine with a light heart; men forget that they are not owners, but trustees, of the truth of Christ, and that their first duty is not to make it, by whatever means, acceptable, but faithfully to bear witness to it as His own. We have no business to say to inquirers, "If you will not take the whole of the creed of Christendom, take such parts of it as you like." Undoubtedly even parts of it, sincerely held by those who have never learned to grasp the whole, can be blessed for the sustenance of spiritual life; but that does not warrant us in attenuating what we ought to present entire. And so, in various ways, we have need to be on our guard against conceptions of religion which may be familiar, convenient, or attractive, but are not, in the full sense, true. Of religion then, in its true significance, we are taught to ask for an increase. We are supposed to be on the right track, but we have only gone a short way. We are drinking in

pure air, but we must get it thoroughly into the system. It is the law of advance, of progress, of improvement, which is taken for granted in the domain of common sense and ordinary business. People say quite reasonably, "You will never win the prizes of life, you will not even secure a decent position for yourself, if you are too idle to make further progress; you will fall back if you do not move on; it will not be standing still, but being thrown out:" and moralists who do not appeal to distinctly religious motives will enforce the same idea; "Try always to be learning more, and to be acting better; to increase in self-control, in justice, kindness, helpfulness, in all the social virtues that form the man." And we Christians ought to find no difficulty in translating such exhortations into the language of the spiritual life. In Scripture God is continually "speaking to His children that they go forward" in that path which "is as the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."[1] The imagery of growth, and that of the completion of a structure, are laid under contribution, in this same sense, by Apostles in well-known

[1] Exod. xiv. 15; Prov. iv. 18; Isa. xl. 31.

passages. We are to "grow up unto Christ," to "grow in the fuller knowledge of God," to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord;" the process of "being built up in Christ," or of "building up ourselves on the basis of our faith," is to be continuous;[1] and St. Paul, after praising some of the Thessalonians for their brotherly love, exhorts them to "abound more and more;"[2] and elsewhere he says of himself that he "forgets what is behind, reaches forth to what is before, and so presses onwards to the goal in view of the prize;"[3] and St. Peter points out that faith should be the original source of seven other graces.[4] And so our Lord in His last discourse told the Apostles that the Father's action in "cleansing" the fruitful branches of the vine was in order "that they might bear more fruit."[5] It is one lesson throughout, pressed home by a variety of such illustrations as can represent movement, life in energy, the putting forth of fresh activities; it is the lesson which is so appropriately concentrated in the solemn Confirmation prayer, that he on whom hands are being laid may "daily increase in the Holy Spirit more and more,

[1] Eph. iv. 15; Col. i. 10; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Col. ii. 7; Jude 20.
[2] 1 Thess. iv. 10. [3] Phil. iii. 13, 14.
[4] 2 Pet. i. 5–7. [5] John xv. 2.

until he come to God's everlasting kingdom:" and again in the prayer which immediately precedes the ordination of Priests, "that we may daily increase and go forwards in the knowledge and faith of the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit."

It is thus both a possibility and an obligation to increase in true religion, to go on from one measure of spiritual strength to another; but by a step at a time, for God does not expect of us everything at once; He leads us on as we can bear it; He looks "first for the blade, then for the ear, then at last for the full corn;"[1] but He does require us to be making some progress, alike in the intelligent appreciation of the truths on which our religion is based, and in the practical attainments to which those truths are so many incentives. What, we may ask, are the conditions of such progress? They may be stated as three; first, a sincere discontent with one's present state, a hearty sense of one's own shortcomings; secondly, a belief that by making use of God's freely offered help, we can really improve and become better; thirdly, a willingness to take pains for such an object. And what are the chief hindrances to our fulfilment of these conditions? They differ, of course, with varieties of disposition. With some

[1] Mark iv. 28.

of us, past failures have had a disheartening effect. People grow weary of making efforts, and then apparently losing the ground they had won. Perhaps they theorize on their own ill-success; the enterprise is too hard for persons of their habits, or tempers, or antecedents; or their time for advance in things spiritual is not come;—"when God wants them, He will call for them;"—meanwhile they turn deaf ears to His present call. Or, more commonly, the cause lies in an easy-going self-complacency, which makes men content with a sort of religiousness, sufficient, they try to think, for practical purposes; they do not like to be roused, shaken up, and put out of their way, the way of comfortable worldliness, until, at least, old age or illness may make them feel the want of something more which at present they are too "slow of heart" to appreciate. They are afraid of committing themselves to religion; they put aside the practical logic of belief, "If I really do hold this wonderful creed, I ought to do so and so, to aim at this, to have my affections thus disposed." They make what has been well called "the poor bargain of being half-religious;" a certain acquaintance with God is enough to satisfy their half-awakened conscience; real intimacy might be too exacting, and they shun it. So they remain

spiritually on the low levels, and think it quite needless to climb upward,—quite needless, unpractical, fanatical,—terms which, if they spoke their minds, they would apply to a great deal of the language in the Gospels or Epistles, not to say in the Church service. Perhaps they resent any manifestation of a higher spiritual tone as a sort of affront to their own "common sense" standard, or any disposition to make much of the supernatural treasures of Christ's household, which to them are neither precious nor attractive.

The result, of course, is that they insensibly, but continuously, slip backwards, and still backwards; that apathy about moral and spiritual interests, which was not unfitly placed on the list of deadly sins,[1] becomes more and more normal, until it paralyzes the very capacity of wishing to make a new start. They go from weakness to weakness, from the chill that is like an autumn evening, to the coldness that is like the Arctic winter. We say, "*they* go;" but what if, by some unresponsiveness to grace, we are risking such a conclusion for ourselves?

In presence of life and of death, of judgment and of eternity, of the wrath and of the love that are divine, let us take in hand the work of "increasing

[1] "Acedia." See Dean Paget, The Spirit of Discipline, p. 6 ff.

in true religion," under the full conviction that if we do not actively care to become better, we shall, as by a natural law, grow worse; and also in the warmth and light of that inspiriting assurance, that our Father wills us to become worthier of our sonship; that our Saviour longs to see in us more sympathy with "the desire of His soul;" that the Spirit of grace and supplications is striving for us against our own perversity; and, in a word, that if we will sincerely endeavour to improve in regard to some one duty, the Arm on which we are thus leaning will carry us on from strength to strength.

SERMON XV.

RELIGIOUS JOY.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."—PHIL. iv. 4.

WITH these inspiriting words, as we all remember, the short passage which serves as our Epistle for the fourth Sunday in Advent rings in, so to speak, the approaching feast of the great Birthday. We know what is coming, and our hearts go forth to meet it; we are sure that this application of St. Paul's reiterated precept, which we make so instinctively in the immediate prospect of Christmas, is according to his mind who, in the very same Epistle, had dwelt with such intense though reverent enthusiasm on the condescension of the Son of God in "taking upon Himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men." And when we recall this same exhortation within the octave which ought to be so helpful in drawing out the full significance of the "good tidings of great joy," we are perhaps in better condition for understanding what religious joy means,

—what are its claims as a duty upon us, and how we can best respond to them, and gain the benefit reserved for those who bring forth what the Apostle counts as second among "the fruits of the Spirit." [1]

To speak of religious joy—that is, of a joy which has religion for its basis, which is sustained by religious belief, which would not be what it is except for religious convictions, which has its being, as the Apostle says, employing a favourite and deeply significant phrase, "in the Lord," in the atmosphere of the Lord's presence, is to speak of the only joy which St. Paul, at any rate, knew or cared for. And if one looks out now into the world, what other joy is to be seen as an active principle? It has been asked in recent years, what are the causes of that melancholy which seems to characterize the literature of our time. For one thing, people are more self-conscious, there is more of what is called self-introspection; and this, carried on apart from that faith which can truly explain our complex being, is apt to foster a morbid temper of mind; so that a simple, hopeful, cheerful activity becomes impossible to those who are but "eating their own hearts," while they think they are learning to "know themselves." Again, the strain and struggle of modern life is increasingly hard and

[1] Gal. v. 22.

urgent; it sometimes wears men out, even physically, before their time; and if it is not lightened by the sense of a Saviour's sympathy, of a Father's blessing on His children's appointed work, it simply kills the capacity of pure joy. Yet, again—and it seems opportune to dwell a little on this point—the men of our age have become peculiarly sensitive as to the suffering that besets humanity; the phenomenon of pain is more distressing to the imagination, even if the actual sensation be absent; the mass of evil, physical and moral, and so largely, as it seems, incurable, in the world around us, presses like an iron weight on the refined and educated consciousness; and many think it more and more impossible to take other than dark views of life, to put any interpretation but the worst on the terrible riddles propounded by so much woe. Hence pessimism has been consolidated into a theory, the result of which must be, in a word, despair.[1] Of course this theory is incompatible with the Christian faith; but it is helpful and instructive to remember that Scripture is far from ignoring the facts which pessimism fastens on, exaggerates, and isolates. The Apostle who bids us "rejoice in the Lord," and says elsewhere, "Rejoice alway," and who describes himself as "sorrowful

[1] See Flint, Anti-theistic Theories, p. 290 ff.

yet alway rejoicing,"[1] is the same that speaks of the creation as "made subject to vanity," that is, to a law of weakness and failure, to conditions of loss and pain, to a "bondage of corruption" which for the time affects even those who "have the firstfruits of the Spirit."[2] There have been typical Christians of whom it may be said that, but for their Christianity, the very keenness of their insight and the depth of their feeling for others might have made them virtually pessimists. Bishop Butler, in a well-known passage, complains that most men are devoid of "that awful sense of things, which the present state of vice and misery and darkness seems to make but reasonable;" elsewhere he speaks of "great part" or "the whole of human life" as "poor," and further on alludes to those who, "leaving religion out of the case," give their own sad answer to the question "whether it be, or be not, eligible to live in this world."[3] Perhaps one may refer in this connection to one whose invincible faith was ever accompanied by a vivid appreciation of other men's temptations to unbelief, and who, in his wonderful autobiography, acknowledged that, but for "the voice speaking so clearly in his conscience and heart," and certifying

[1] 1 Thess. v. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 10. [2] Rom. viii. 20–23.
[3] Analogy, part ii., c. 5, s. 3; c. 8. See also Sermon vi.

the existence of God, he would be overpowered by the "appalling" sight of the evil that was in the world, as a fact "bewildering" to the reason, and "inflicting upon the mind the sense of" an insoluble mystery.[1] For those, then, who have lost their hold on faith, that quickened perception of nature's tragic side which modern life in its various aspects has tended to evoke, involves, apparently, a choice between sheer pessimism and the suppression of all true interest in "the heavy yoke that is on the sons of Adam."[2] But such artificial insensibility is not cheering, only deadening; its selfish "peace" is a dreary "solitude;" the man who buys "composure"[3] at this rate becomes more and more alive to the wearisome blankness which steadily settles down over a life that refuses to take God for its centre, and thereby illustrates the parable of the savourless salt. And so, in divers ways, to have lost faith in God and Christ is to be self-exiled from the area wherein joy, as pertaining to a rational and moral being, can do its good work for the enrichment of human life, and the orderly formation of human character.

We, my brethren, by God's grace, have our station within that area; we ought to know something of

[1] Newman, Apologia, p. 242.
[2] Ecclus. xl. 1. [3] Mozley, Essays, ii. 248.

that joy which, as St. Paul says in this same epistle, grows out of faith, which elsewhere he links with the peace that is found in "believing;" which St. Peter, describing it as "unspeakable and full of glory," connects with belief in the Christ as unseen but loved; and which St. John desired to share with his readers on the basis of a fellowship with the Father and the Son.[1] It is a very different thing from mere exuberance of spirits, or even from high transporting emotion; it may be ardent, but it is grave and solemn, inseparable from awe, reverential in tone, controlled in expression, too conscious of the Presence in which it stands to take effusive freedoms with holy names and august facts, after the fashion, if one must say it, of a too sensational hymnology. Observe how practically St. Paul speaks of it; he sees its working in the "abundance" of a contribution for the relief of poorer brethren at a distance; he testifies that, as proceeding from the Holy Spirit, it can exist amid much outward "affliction."[2] Remember what St. Paul's Master and ours foretold as to the "fulness of joy" which He seems to identify with peace, and which His servants might secure "in" Him, although in the world they should have tribulation;[3] and how

[1] Phil. i. 25; Rom. xv. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8; 1 John i. 3, 4.
[2] 2 Cor. viii. 2; 1 Thess. i. 6. [3] John xv. 11; xvi. 33.

the promise was fulfilled in that intense and radiant happiness, that "complete satisfaction of heart," that "calm and peaceful assurance," which, as it has been well said, displayed itself in the life of the early Church, amid a malcontent and "disappointed" world, in which suicide "had come to be looked upon as a reasonable" escape from tedium or from misery.[1] What does all this point to, but the dependence of religious joy on a true belief? Those Christians of the primitive age had got hold of something which explained for them the why, the whence, and the whither of existence; they "had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" they had experienced the touch of a new spiritual force; they had learned what it was to "have life through believing in the Son of God,"[2] incarnate, crucified, risen, enthroned. If we can believe with them, we shall be able to rejoice with them; but we must not hope to assimilate their gladness, if we detach ourselves from the standpoint of their creed.

Here, then, is one point: Christian joy depends on Christian belief, but on such a belief as was, with those first Christians, a vitalising principle of con-

[1] Wace, Bampton Lectures, p. 150.
[2] Heb. vi. 5; John xx. 31; 1 John v. 13.

duct. And next let us observe how, in its turn, this joy was found to tell upon conduct; it was not a mere spiritual luxury, but a stimulus to renewed moral effort, to acts of charity, acts of self-sacrifice, acts of confessorship. It carried the believer over very rough ground; it helped him to conquer difficulties, to endure hardness, to be brave and steadfast and loyal under persecution, to say, "Thanks be to God," when receiving the fatal sentence,[1] or to gasp out "Praise to Thee, O Christ,"[2] when every nerve was quivering under torture. In short, it verified for him, with a truly brilliant completeness, the assurance once given to an anxious people, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."[3] St. Paul's words, we cannot doubt, were repeatedly like a fire in the souls of those first converts, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, rejoice! Let your considerateness be known to all men; the Lord is at hand. Be anxious about nothing; but in everything, by prayer, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep guard over your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." Does it sound too good to be true now? Do any of us hear it with

[1] Acts of Martyrdom of St. Cyprian.
[2] Ruinart, Act. Sinc. p. 417.
[3] Neh. viii. 10.

a secret sigh, as if it were, at any rate, out of our reach, as if it belonged to the exceptionally "splendid vision" which encircled the Church's childhood, and were gone past recovery for us, who must be contented with "the light of common day"? True, we cannot have that fresh sense of an immense relief,—that sudden perception of a marvellous light beaming out of darkness, which stirred in hearts that were opened to the teaching of Paul or of John. But have we not the Christ of Paul and John still with us, immortal in spiritual youth, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"? If we say that our temperament is not attuned to the strains of an exuberant gladness, that for us this annually recurring profession of Christmas "happiness" has in it something formal or conventional, depend upon it that we have got wrong somehow. We may be getting near to that unhappy condition of mind in which people tell us, with a cynical shrug, that they "cannot rejoice to order," a saying which would seem to them utterly heartless when a dear friend's birthday came round. If we plead some temporary lowness of spirits, it may prove to be a dull indefinite apathy, a phase of that "sorrow of the world" which is truly said to "work death,"[1] because, as an "earth-

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 10.

born cloud," it hides from us the "Sun of our souls," because it makes us practically forget that "to us long since the glorious Child is born."[1] Let Christmas shame us out of a sombre and thankless mood, which enfeebles the soul which it darkness. Let us throw ourselves heartily into the spirit of that soaring hymn which summons the faithful to Bethlehem, and assumes that they will "come joyful and triumphant." Let us take advantage, for our moral and spiritual health, of the strong sweet influence of a season in which "it is wrong to be otherwise than joyful."[2] Or suppose that something has really happened to disquiet or to distress us, are we to say, "God cannot expect me, under this pressure of trouble, to rejoice,—it would be simply unreal"? Assuredly He expects us not to be malcontent, as if He had lost His right to our thanksgivings; He is not the less our own "Holy Father, the Almighty and Everlasting God," because we are sad or anxious; He would have us remember that "He is where He was," that the Nativity is as much a fact as ever, that we are most likely to win the very comfort that we want by going out of ourselves into the atmosphere of its

[1] Christian Year, Evening, and Third Sunday after Easter; cp. *ib.* First Sunday after Trinity.

[2] Newman, Serm. viii. 254.

imperishable joy. But, again, if there be, as perhaps there may be, coiled up somewhere far back in the soul, a lurking evil that keeps our will, if only on one point, out of touch with the will of Him who came to cleanse us from iniquity, and that therefore, of course, prevents us from sympathizing with the gladness of His single-hearted worshippers, let us draw it forth resolutely by His aid, and hurl it far away from us, and then give Him such thanks as befit the penitent for coming to "save His people from their sins."

I will conclude in the words of a great preacher already quoted on the Christmas lesson of mingled "humility and joyfulness." "Let us pray" for "the spirit of ever-abundant, ever-springing love, which overpowers and sweeps away the vexations of life by its own richness and strength, and which, above all things, unites us to Him who is the fountain and the centre of all mercy, loving-kindness, and joy."

SERMON XVI.

THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His name was called Jesus."—LUKE ii. 21.

THE festival which happily consecrates for us the opening of a new civil and social year has much to say to us if we have a mind to listen. At a landmark which may be the last in our course, and which, at any rate, should make even the heedless thoughtful, it sets before us two points in our Redeemer's holy childhood, which may remind us how every part of His life on earth forms a link in a truly coherent whole; how all its facts depend on, and are interpreted by, the original dominant fact of His Incarnation; how rich they all are in practical instructiveness for those who would make conduct square with creed. The Christmas thought of an unspeakable condescension, whereby the Only-begotten became Man, is now specialised, as it were, by the first particular instance of a self-humiliation within the lines of His human

life, and of that suffering which was to be one of its main features. When but just a week old in this world, He becomes obedient to the law "under" which, as St. Paul reminds us, He was born ;[1] and the edge of that law, as it touches Him, is sharp. The Circumcision, in the phrase of a great English bishop of old times,[2] was "a first Passion, of no small bitterness ;" and so Keble, when referring to pain as borne by christened infants, describes the Virgin Mother as "resigning" her Babe "to shed His blood."[3] And this foreshadowing of the Cross was in harmony, alike in time and purport, with the solemn bestowal of the Name prescribed for Him even before His conception, the Name which acquired its full significance when the work of man's salvation was accomplished in His death, so that Peter could proclaim that there was "no other name given among men, whereby they must be saved,"[4] than that of the Crucified and Risen. We read these things in the light of His transcendent personal dignity ; we ought also to read them into the story of our own lives, to let them tell upon our characters ; if not, our belief in the Incarnation is "dead, being alone,"—we hold an outward profession of godliness, but in fact we "deny its power." May

[1] Gal. iv. 4. [2] Grosseteste, Epist. 32.
[3] Lyra Innocentium, p. 63. [4] Acts iv. 12.

"better things, which join on to salvation,"[1] be true of us, before the opportunities of one more Christmas-tide have finally passed away!

Let us look, then, for a brief space, into the meaning of our Redeemer's Circumcision. It brings into focus all the ideas connected with what St. Paul describes as His assumption of the form, or essential character, of a servant. The Son of God, as such, was intrinsically Sovereign Lord of all creation; but when He stooped to take our nature upon Him, He accepted in this world the position of the first of His Father's human servants; and in so doing He placed Himself humanly under real limitations, kept His glory for the most part under a veil, and His Divine powers in reserve, within the area of the created human life. In this sense, and as really occupying that area, He restrained the manifestation of the majesty which belonged to Him as God. St. Paul's phrase, which means literally, He "emptied" Himself, may, by comparison with other instances of its use,[2] be taken to mean that, instead of "insisting on" His coequality with the Father, He made it, so to speak, inoperative *in so far*

[1] Heb. vi. 9.

[2] Rom. iv. 14; 1 Cor. i. 17; ix. 15; 2 Cor. ix. 3; to make "void" or inoperative. The absolute use of ἐκένωσε in Phil. ii. 7, as in these passages, tells somewhat against the literal rendering; for we might have expected to be told of what He did "empty" Himself.

as He appeared in the likeness of men:[1] He became, as Man, inferior to the Father, and thus, in the old sense,[2] "disparaged" Himself, or lived as *not* coequal. It is a mistake to say that He really parted with anything that was originally His; while on the one hand He did not deify His manhood, so neither on the other did He humanise His Godhead. For He retained, as the sixth General Council affirms, His Divine will and Divine activity, while He took to Himself the will and the activity of manhood.[3] He continued to exercise His infinite prerogatives in their fulness, to "uphold all things,"[4] in heaven and earth alike, by the energy of His universal presence; to live, and therefore to act and reign, as God Almighty and Most High. Even when speaking as Man, He revealed, as far as His chosen ones could bear it, His continuous existence in the bosom of the Father, His inalienable fellowship in the eternal life of God. And as in His temptation, His weariness, His wondering at

[1] Observe the dependence of ἐκένωσε on λαβών and γενόμενος, as of ἐταπείνωσεν on γενόμενος ὑπήκοος.

[2] Cp. Ducange; "disparagari" was "to lose status among one's peers."

[3] "Two natural wills or volitions, and two natural activities, in Him, without division, change, or confusion . . . two natural wills not contrary to each other . . . but His human will not resisting, but rather subject to His divine and almighty will."—Mansi, Concil. xi. 637.

[4] Heb. i. 3.

unbelief or misapprehension, His sense of loneliness, His mysterious agony, His very death itself, while subject by His own will, as well as His Father's, to change and suffering, and living thus far as genuinely Man, "like to us in all points, sin excepted," He was ever the same eternal Person,—was still, through all, essentially and immutably God,—so it was when legal righteousness was fulfilled in His holy Circumcision.

But the moral value of this obedience to law is best apprehended by observing the place which circumcision held among ancient Jewish ordinances. Repeatedly, in after-days, our Lord, as a true Israelite, complied with ceremonial obligations, as when He attended the annual feasts. But circumcision was fundamental to the covenant, as it was condescendingly called, between God and all the seed of Abraham. The uncircumcised male child was to be cut off from his people, as having broken that covenant. Faithfulness to covenant-obligations was, for Israelites, the most sacred of all duties; it was the response on man's part to the revelation of God's good will, of the changeless love and righteousness of Him whose title was "I am, and will be, what I am," whose word once pledged would not be void, who would never break His covenant. And Jesus, by thus undergoing the rite which expressed fidelity on man's part,

enforces on us the lesson of adherence to that "better covenant, established on better promises," into which we have all been admitted in our baptism. As the baptismal service puts it, "His promise He will most surely keep and perform;" but are we endeavouring to be true to ours? To bring the question to a plain point, are we losing the Christian horror and dread of sin? Are we, as an excellent writer puts it, regarding our faults from without, as so many regrettable "circumstances"?[1] Is our standard of Christian duty relaxed under worldly influences? are we, even secretly, treating the Christian ideal of conduct as beautiful perhaps, but over-strained and unpractical? To think thus, to live for a day as if this were so, is to dispense with the obligations of our baptismal covenant, and virtually to retract the promises made to our Lord.

Let us carry this thought a little further. Intelligent piety among the Hebrews would see in circumcision the symbol of an interior moral reality. The circumcised Israelite was not to be uncircumcised in heart. He must cut off, must cast away, that stiff-necked self-will which insisted on taking its own line, which would not hearken to the Fatherly voice, which claimed independence of the Supreme Moral Ruler; and by this interior circumcision he

[1] C. M. Yonge, in "Henrietta's Wish," p. 120.

would be enabled to love God with heart and soul.[1] And doubtless the faithful in Israel, the men of tender consciences, with whom to fear God was to live worthily, remembered the very idea of their covenant, that circumcision pledged them to "put off the body of the sins of the flesh;"[2] St. Paul, when he uses that phrase as to Christian obligations, and in connection with the circumcision of Christ, was but giving a Christian development to a familiar Jewish idea. And so, when we think of our Lord as subjected, in infancy, to that stern admonitory rite, we must feel, more keenly than Jews could, how urgent is our obligation to secure for ourselves the benefit of a true circumcision of the spirit, to beware of the stubborn pride which scorns the blessing of obedience, of the carnal impurity that shuts out the sight of God. It was one of the many survivals of Pagan usages in Europe, to celebrate the first day of the year with "revellings and banquetings" which were linked in spirit to the old "idolatries:" hence we find, in ancient Western services for the day, significant protests against "unhallowed feastings, unreal joys, snares of the devil, the contagion of a

[1] Cp. Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6; Jer. iv. 4; ix. 26; Rom. ii. 29.

[2] Col. ii. 11: "of the sins" is probably a gloss to bring out the sense of the phrase.

deadly perversity" or "profaneness."[1] If it was opportune then, it is, under altered conditions, as opportune now to open the new year with a true purpose of "living more nearly as we pray" for grace to "mortify all worldly and carnal lusts, that we may in all things obey God's blessed will."

And if we bring together the lessons taught by His Circumcision and by His Name-giving, we see that whereas others before Him had been called Jehoshua,—and in their case the name simply testified to the fact that Jehovah, the God of the covenant, could and would be His people's Saviour,—in His case that fact was to be actually impersonated, for "He Himself,"[2] as the angel said to Joseph, "should save His people from their sins," He Himself being the Eternal Lord, and thus Divinely able to save to the very uttermost. But to save whom? There is the point; we must comply with His terms, which are not arbitrary, but are determined by His very being, by the laws of that moral government which is the expression of God's own nature. He cannot save us in our sins, or with our sins, but only from our sins,—only if we correspond with His intentions, if we place ourselves in true relation with His mind and will, desiring simply to love what He loves and hate what

[1] "Gelasian" Sacramentary, in Muratori, Lit. Rom. Vet. i. 501.

[2] Αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει, Matt. i. 21.

He hates, and "grow up in all things into Him" who is our Example, because He is our Redeemer, the Jesus of the penitent and the singleminded, of wills made straight, and of hearts made clean,—of those who strive to keep the commandments, and gradually to abolish the body of sin, to crucify the flesh with its lusts. O that we all, whatever have been our past failures, might now take our places amid that happy company! Let us beg our Lord and Saviour to quicken and confirm whatever good desires are astir in us, to pour into our souls the grace that can cleanse and restore; let us offer to His sweet service the lives thus far prolonged in His mercy, and bring them, by daily devout watchfulness, under the shadow, say rather into the sunlight, of that Name which may thus be "our solace and strength, the beginning of every work, the end of every desire."[1]

"O God, who, having become Man for our sakes, wast pleased on this day to be circumcised, and to receive the name of Saviour; Mercifully grant, that we, renouncing the works of the flesh, may by calling upon Thy Holy Name obtain the prize of eternal salvation; who livest and reignest with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever."[2]

[1] Manning (Archdeacon), Sermons, iv. 59.

[2] Collect for the Circumcision in the Parisian Breviary.

SERMON XVII.

GOD'S CONTEST WITH THE SOUL.

"He said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."—GEN. xxxii. 26.

OF all the characters in the Bible history, perhaps the one which it is hardest for men of our race to appreciate equitably is that of the patriarch Jacob. His story is full of interest, towards the close it is full of pathos: yet his failings are just those for which English people are least able to make allowance. We are repelled alike by his timorousness and by his craftiness; we are apt to think of him as, in these respects, a true type of that Oriental nature on which, from our Western moral eminence, we look down. When he has to face a danger, his way is to be sore distressed or frightened,[1] and then to get round it by some elaborate artifice; and what puzzles, and, as it were, provokes us is, that these devices go on side by side with a distinctive habitual piety. He is a difficulty; he perplexes us. If he is religious,

[1] Cp. Gen. xxxi. 31.

really religious, why is he so prone to "help Providence" by the schemes of a trickster? If he were walking straight with God, would he be so apt to walk crookedly before men?

It is, no doubt, vexing to observers with an eye for moral symmetry to look at a character that is not at unity with itself. Their impulse is to simplify the case by ignoring one or other of its elements. But such simplifications are arbitrary evasions of the question in hand. The man, be he who he may, stands there before us, to be studied: he has this virtue, but then he has that vice; here is a strong point, there is a very weak one; one does not well see how this bad habit is compatible with that amiable quality; yet, somehow or other, the fact is so, and we are trying to comprehend the man as he is. And then, perhaps, it occurs to us to ask whether we, his critics, are quite in a position to marvel at the phenomenon of human inconsistency; whether each of us does not know something of "at any rate one person"[1] who is not yet properly "one" in the sense which the Psalmist had in mind when he uttered the comprehensive prayer, "Unite my heart."[2]

Of course, also, Jacob is not proposed to us as

[1] Keble, Letters of Spiritual Counsel, p. 89.
[2] Ps. lxxxvi. 11. Cp. Hos. x. 2.

anything like the pattern of an Old Testament saint. He did, indeed, receive repeated tokens of Divine mercy, repeated assurances of Divine protection; his name, suggestive of "supplanting," was superseded by one of lofty and solemn significance; his deathbed utterances were filled with the power of prophecy. But he suffers the penalty of his early faults; his days are comparatively "few and evil;" he is haunted by danger, anxiety, and bereavement. Yet amid all his troubles, and with all his infirmities, he has an abiding sense of the Unseen: his character is gradually "purified and elevated by the fixed religious principle, the resolute sacrifice of present to future,"[1] which his brother so fatally lacked; and it has been said that his "distinguishing grace was a habit of affectionate musing upon God's providences towards him in times past, and of overflowing thankfulness for them."[2] One of his most beautiful outbursts of thanksgiving belongs to a moment of not wholly unreasonable fear, in the immediate prospect of meeting his brother Esau. "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands:—and

[1] Stanley, Jewish Church, i. 49.
[2] Newman, Sermons, v. 76.

Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." He claims that promise, and then he makes what arrangements occur to him as likely to minimise the peril: he next "rises up in the night," and sends his wives, his sons, and his women-servants, over a stream that feeds the sacred river. And there he "is left alone, and there wrestles a man with him until the breaking of the day,"—a man whom the prophet Hosea explains to be an angel.[1] In this strange contest, Jacob is the party assailed; he defends himself for a long time successfully; at last the mysterious opponent, by a sudden touch, dislocates his thighbone. All that he can do, when thus disabled, is to cling fast to his adversary; this is indicated by the words of the latter, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." Convinced of the superhuman character of the "man" whom he still clasps, he says he will not relax his hold except on receiving a blessing: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." The words, in Hosea's reference to the story, are attended with tears: "He wept and made supplication to the angel." Then comes the change of his name from Jacob to Israel: "For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men;" or, as the Revised Version has it, "For thou hast striven with God and with men." "And Jacob asked

[1] Hos. xii. 4.

him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, said he, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh."

"Which things"—if we may apply to this scene what St. Paul says[1] of an earlier incident,—are "fraught with a deeper meaning." Without speculating as to the sense in which the story of the wrestling, as a story, should be read, we can easily discern its spiritual import.

To begin with, Jacob's sense of utter dependence on Divine help had recently stirred the depths of his nature. He represents a soul which has been constrained by circumstances to feel more intensely than ever its dependence on the Fountain of personal being. "*As* myself, I am helpless: but I belong to God, and I know that I have had dealings with Him. He has done much for me in the past; He will surely take care of me for the future." It looks up to Him as its all-sufficing Refuge, and renders the twofold homage of a living thankfulness and of an absolute trust. Next it finds itself, for a time, alone, and in

[1] Gal. iv. 24.

the dark; exceptionally thrown upon itself, removed from the sympathies which halve the burdens of life, and from those lights of tranquillising comfort which help us to postpone our anxieties. The stream of existence is flowing by, and overhead and all around is that mystery of individual, incommunicable "self-hood," which makes so many men shrink from their own company. And then it is that Divine grace finds its own signal opportunity. It is the same thought which Hosea expresses: "Behold, I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart"[1] there. So, to adopt the imagery of Peniel, grace comes suddenly near to a man, as if determined to bring home to him the truths which he had put by. "I have an errand unto thee;" "the Lord hath a controversy with thee." For the soul's own good, its Maker and Lord will not leave it to its own guiding. He will force, as it were, the controversy upon it, as the angel began the wrestling with Jacob; He will demand its attention; He will come as a Visitor that cannot be denied. It may be by some great change in life, which is felt to constitute a crisis, or by some thrilling overmastering consciousness of the nearness and supremacy of the unseen world. But human nature recoils from such close handling:

[1] Hos. ii. 14. See margin.

it is prone to resist the impression which would task it so austerely. This unresponsiveness, this eagerness to find good reasons for not learning the lesson which God would teach, is not inconsistent with previous earnestness, with acts of faith, or acts of thanksgiving. It may go on "until the day breaks." The lesson is harder than we had thought of; we are afraid of what we may be committed to: but then comes the touch on the hollow of the thigh, some heavy distress, some trouble that breaks in upon the wholeness and tranquillity of the life; it may be illness or a bereavement, or some other form of disabling affliction. Anything which proves to man his own impotence may be as the touch of that irresistible hand. And then the question is whether a man will take this "touch" in the right spirit. He may take it quite otherwise. It is possible for him to revolt against the discipline; for, as we know from the case of Ahaz, there are those who, when "in distress, trespass yet more against the Lord."[1] Pain does not always subdue and soften the sufferer. It frequently shuts him up in himself: it sometimes embitters and hardens him, and then the "touch" may be actually resented, as a fresh reason for dogged resistance; and such resistance may vent itself in overt rebellion.

[1] 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.

as when men "blaspheme because of their pains, and repent not,"[1] and may end in that fixed obduracy which extorts, as it were, from God the sentence, "Let him alone."[2] And Hell consists in being thus "let alone" by God.

But let us look at the result which is symbolized by Jacob's behaviour when disabled. Happy the soul which, after it has been "touched," accepts the shock as a warning given in mercy, seeks only for closer union with the Divine Friend who chastens in love, and importunately begs for a further and fuller blessing. It comes,—and the soul feels that its previous knowledge of God had been comparatively but "the hearing of the ear;" that now, in effect, it "sees" Him. The vision passes away, but so does the weird darkness which had brought with it that oppressive sense of solitude. "The sun rises upon" the wayfarer, for whom the night's experience has changed the face of life and of the world.

Some of us, no doubt, will remember the wonderful stanzas in which Charles Wesley has embodied the spiritual teaching of this narrative. He somewhat misses one point on which we have dwelt, for he writes as if the soul were itself to begin the wrestling: but our text could not be more fervidly and touch-

[1] Rev. xvi. 11. [2] Hos. iv. 17.

ingly paraphrased than when he thus addresses the "Traveller unknown"—

> "Yield to me now, for I am weak,
> But confident in self-despair;
> Speak to my heart, in blessings speak;
> Be conquered by my instant prayer:
> Speak, or Thou never hence shalt move,
> And tell me if Thy Name be Love!"

Or, as he words it in a terse and exquisite hymn:—

> "Till Thou Thy perfect love impart,
> Till Thou Thyself bestow,
> Be this the cry of every heart,
> 'I will not let Thee go.'"

If we would profit by the mystery of Peniel, let us see whether in any single point we are now resisting the appeals of grace, whether we are holding out against serious conviction, whether we need the touch on the hollow of the thigh. Let us beg our Lord to show us wherefore He is in any way contending with us,[1] to give us a "due sense" alike of our own sins and of His mercy. Or if He has inflicted the shock which was to teach us what otherwise we might have still refused to learn, and if, for the days which remain, we feel its effects, and halt as we go forward on "life's journey," still let us adore the Hand which does but wither the strength of

[1] Job x. 2.

nature in order to bless us with the invigorating succours of grace; let us believe that striving prevails with God, that prayer takes the kingdom of heaven by force,[1] and that he who by true prayer says in effect, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me," will be enabled to appropriate the glad and thankful experience—

> "'Tis Love, 'tis Love! Thou died'st for me:
> I hear Thy whisper in my heart;
> The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
> Pure, universal Love Thou art; . . .
> Thy mercies never shall remove,
> Thy nature and Thy Name is Love!"

For it is "the one only Name under heaven wherein we sinners can find health and salvation," the precious and saving Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] Matt. xi. 12.

SERMON XVIII.

FEAR AND LOVE.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love."—1 John iv. 18.

It was characteristic of the old Hebrew piety to recognise the mysteriousness of the ways of God. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" "Lo, these are (but) parts of His ways." "Thy judgments are a great deep." "Thy footsteps are not known." "Thy thoughts are very deep." "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being His counsellor, hath taught Him?" "Who hath marked His word, and heard it?"[1] And the Apostle who so habitually exulted in the Gospel as a complete revelation of "the great love of God who is rich in mercy,"[2] could bend in awe-struck worship before the depth of the "riches" of the Divine wisdom and knowledge, before the "judgments" that were

[1] Job xi. 7; xxvi. 14; Ps. xxxvi. 6; lxxvii. 19; xcii. 5; Isa. xl. 13; Jer. xxiii. 18; cp. Rom. xi. 33. [2] Eph. i. 4.

"unsearchable," and the "ways" that were "past tracing out."

And Scripture, as God's book, exhibits not a little of this character. The New Testament was never intended to teach Christianity in the first instance. It consists of books addressed, as St. Luke's preface words it, to Christians already "instructed;" but it confirms with amply sufficient clearness what they have learned from oral teaching as to the faith. Yet it is remarkably bold in its disregard of logical symmetry, or of systematic verbal coherence. Ordinary writers take pains to harmonize one idea with another, to balance statement by statement. In Scripture, not only different writers, but even the same writer in different passages, will put forward diverse aspects of the one truth, without pausing to prove anxiously and laboriously how this point, which seems inconsistent with that point, is yet really in accordance with it,—how the lines which from a lower point of view seem parallel, from a higher are seen to coalesce. These rough ends, so to speak, of Scripture teaching are helpful, if they set us thinking out for ourselves, by patient comparison of texts, the reconciliation which does not lie on the surface. For we ought to aim at such a result; we are so constituted as to be impatient of

confusion, to seek persistently for order, in our thought as in our life; we know that God is a God of order, and that His truth, if duly apprehended, must shine out in wholeness and in unity. No doubt, "inferential theology" has its dangers; it may theorize too ambitiously, it may trust its own logic too simply; and Catholic doctrine has often been reproached by heresy for not being sufficiently consecutive, for halting, here and there, between premiss and conclusion.[1] But still we are right in looking, within due limits, for a principle which may account for and hold together the various forms of Scripture language, as to a mode of Divine operation or a condition of man's spiritual life.

To apply this to our text. The words of St. John as to fear and love would probably startle us if they were less familiar. If we look steadily at them, we cannot help asking how they are to be combined with a large amount of Scripture teaching on the subject of religious fear. What they say is, in effect, that "fear" and "love" are, as such, in antagonism; that in proportion as love gains strength, it tends to oust "fear;" that to be, in a religious sense, under the influence of "fear," is to be in an imperfect condition with regard to "love."

[1] Cp. Mozley, The Theory of Development, p. 42.

And yet Scripture assigns to fear a considerable place in the apparatus, so to speak, of religious motives and forces. We need not dwell on those numerous passages in the Psalms, or the Proverbs, or the Prophets, or the histories,[1] which insist on "the fear of the Lord" as "the beginning of wisdom," as a necessary condition of His "service," as the distinguishing mark of a religious character, as the crowning gift of the sanctifying Spirit. Let us grant that by "fear," in this sense, is meant that reverential sense of the Infinite Majesty which is manifestly inseparable from the relation of moral and intelligent creatures to the Author of their being and the Object of their worship, and which is described in Isaiah's glorious vision as belonging to the Seraphim who veil their faces while they adore. Let us think rather of fear in the ordinary sense, as involving an apprehension of evil, and, when it acts as a motive, deterring us from this or that course. Does it thus come within the range of the Gospel morality? Undoubtedly. "I will forewarn you," says our Lord, "whom ye shall fear: Fear Him who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear Him."[2] St. Paul can

[1] *E.g.* Ps. cxi. 10; Prov. i. 7; Isa. xi. 2; Jer. v. 22; 1 Sam. xii. 24.
[2] Luke xii. 5.

"persuade men" by a reference to that "fear" which has its eyes fixed on the judgment seat, where each one shall be requited for "what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad."[1] He uses the fact of the Divine working within us as a reason for "working out our salvation with fear"—yes, and "with trembling."[2] St. Peter passes from the thought of God's impartial judgment to the necessity of "passing the time of" earthly "sojourning in fear."[3] In such passages the underlying purport is obvious: "Do this, avoid that, or it will be the worse for you: obey, on peril of the consequences of disobedience." How, then, will the text stand when confronted with a line of address at once so authoritative, so luminous, and so stern?

The answer is, that our Lord and St. Peter and St. Paul are urging men to fear the penal consequences of sin, considered in their whole length and breadth, and concentrated into that one supremely terrible consequence—perpetual exclusion from the presence of God; whereas St. John is looking at "fear" of penal suffering considered in itself—the dread of hell, pure and simple. This is the fear which, he says, "hath torment," or rather, "punishment;" it carries punishment in its bosom. It

[1] 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. [2] Phil. ii. 12, 13. [3] 1 Pet. i. 17.

regards God not as the all-holy and all-good Father who has every right to filial obedience, but as an irresistible Power, not to be trifled with or escaped from, who can and will inflict tremendous penalties on those who venture to defy His authority. The idea is somewhat like that which St. Paul repeatedly expresses in such phrases as "the letter that kills," "the ministration of death," "the commandment," which, if received without love, and simply as an imperative "Thou shalt not," under peril of terrible consequences—was fatal rather than helpful to moral "life," because it often provoked the will to rebellion against mandates which did not appeal to the filial temper, or enlist the affections on the side of obedience. And yet the letter must come in while the spirit is not yet appreciated. Fear of punishment, either as imminent or as distant, is not a false or bad principle of action in its own place, and for its own time. It is appropriate for the earlier stage of spiritual training. It is commonly called "servile;" but until a soul can realise its sonship, the servant's position is the one which it must occupy, and has at any rate the assurance of "bread enough" for present needs. A Psalmist could draw an illustration from the wistful looking up of slaves under chastisement,[1] and the fear which "has punishment," although in this sense

[1] Ps. cxxiii. 2.

"servile," is disciplinary; it marks a stage in the moral progress through which the supreme Educator, Divinely equitable and patient, conducts His children by slow steps, in consideration of hearts not fully softened,[1] and consciences not thoroughly enlightened, which, as yet, are unfit for a high religious standard. It is said that the son of that profligate French prince who is branded with the name of the "godless Regent" was, in his boyhood,[2] deeply impressed by what his tutor told him about the punishments reserved for obstinate sinners. He grew up into manhood, serious, conscientious, pure in life, devout towards God, compassionate towards men. The fear of hell, as such, had done its work at the right time; it fairly burned out the germs of sinful passion; it prepared him, we cannot doubt, for a better spiritual condition at last attained. It may be so with many a youth who is not yet accessible to higher motives, but who believes that wicked ways lead to hell, and who therefore, in his own phrase, "keeps himself straight." Is not this "fear" worth something? Bishop Andrewes, alluding to it, observes that it is "as the base-court to the temple;" and adds that a man must do his duty "for

[1] Matt. xix. 8.

[2] Louis, Duke of Orleans; born 1703, died 1752; grandfather of "Egalité:" Carlyle calls him the "praying" duke. Fr. Rev. i. 23.

fear of punishment, if he cannot get himself to do it for love of righteousness."[1] As St. Augustine says, in his comment on the passage, this is not the fear that "is clean,"—it arises not out of love of God, but out of the terror of suffering; yet it may make the whole difference to a person's moral future whether, at a particular critical time, he has it, or has it not. If he has it, he resists the temptation, he does not commit the sin; and that is to gain much. The perilous hour is got through safely; the conscience escapes a defilement and a burden; the ground, so far, is clear for the further operations of grace. And these will, by degrees, absorb the fear of punishment, simply as such—into what? Into such a love for God as excludes all fear whatsoever? No, rather into a fear which is so absolutely compatible with love that it may even be said to grow out of love, to be contained in love's very "heart."[2] For what is the love here intended, but a closer and closer adhesion to the will of God as the supreme good, an ever-growing desire to please Him and to be right with Him, because He is what He is to us? And so long as we are still under probation, there must be the possibility of ultimate failure, even on the part of the

[1] Andrewes, Sermons, iii. 336.
[2] Baldwin Brown, The Higher Life, p. 213.

"grey-haired saint;" as Bunyan in his "dream" saw that "there was a way to hell from the gates of heaven, as well as from the city of destruction;" as, before now, men have fallen from God at their very "last hour;" as once, according to a most impressive story, an all-but martyr became, through unforgivingness, an apostate.[1] And that possibility involves a fear which dwells not on the mere pain of future punishment, but on that which is the essential and central misery of hell—the forfeiture of the life-giving love of God. This fear may be called filial, and not servile; for in proportion as a child loves heartily a good parent, the more solicitous will he be not to grieve, displease, disappoint that parent by an exhibition of thankless perversity. Thus the fear of losing our hold on God by ceasing to be responsive and obedient will not be cast out by love, so long as sin remains possible. The soul will ask itself, "What if I should, after all, grow worse instead of better, until at last I break with goodness and with God? What if sin should do that which 'neither height nor depth, nor any other creature' can do? What if, through a self-reliant presumption, I should grow cold to God's love, should constrain Him at last to say of me, 'Let

[1] Sapricius. Mart. S. Nicephori; Ruinart, Act. Sinc. p. 283.

him alone'?" That is the language of a fear that is "clean," and of which St. Augustine says with a splendid boldness, "When what you fear is that God's presence may abandon you, then you embrace Him, then you desire to enjoy Him;" and again,[1] "This is the fear that is pure, that endureth; love does not take this fear away, nor cast it out, but rather embraces it, and holds and possesses it as a companion." [1]

A religion which professes to dispense with this kind of fear, on the ground that Christianity has discarded it as a permanent motive, and that "rational piety" involves an "assurance" which makes it needless, or a "spiritual freedom" which makes it ignoble, may be very attractive, and become widely popular; but it is not the religion of Scripture and of the Church. One may suspect that its estimate of sin is gravely defective. In regard to assurance, we must distinguish: a Christian may have a humble and well-grounded assurance that he is at present in a state of grace; he can have no assurance, except by a very special and, as it were, miraculous favour, such as St. Paul had received when he wrote his last Epistle,[2] that he will always continue in it;[3] and for this plain reason, that although

[1] S. Aug. in loc. and in Joan. Evang. tr. 43. 7. So Serm. 348: "Cum cavet anima ne Deus illam *desertus* deserat," etc. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 8.

[3] On this question Saravia distinguishes between "certitudo" and

he has every reason to trust God, he has only too much reason to mistrust himself, to "take heed lest he fall from his own steadfastness,"[1] and forfeit grace by ceasing to answer to its appeal.

Let us be on our guard against any such false confidence, as nothing less than a "snare of the devil," and therefore against any such false versions of Christianity as would encourage us to cast off holy fear. The collect for the second Sunday after Trinity was wisely enlarged at the last revision of the Prayer Book, so as to bring the mention of such fear into both its clauses.[2] Let our fear of grieving and quenching the Spirit, of wounding the heart of Jesus Christ, of losing our place in the house of our Father, be "steadfast and perpetual" in companionship with love; let us pray to be "saved by love" *and* "by fear;" let us believe that if by God's vast mercy we attain that bliss from which it will be impossible to fall, we shall thank Him for having aided us by a motive to obedience which will then at last have done its work, and have passed away for ever.

"securitas." True faith, he says, will give the former, but will make believers "sollicitos, non securos." See his comments on the case of Barret, in Strype's "Whitgift," iii. 321.

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 17.

[2] The original of what is now the first clause is, "Quia nunquam tua gubernatione destituis quos in soliditate tuæ dilectionis instituis."

SERMON XIX.

SINCERITY TOWARDS GOD.

"But lo, Thou requirest truth in the inward parts."—Ps. li. 6.

THIS has been called "the Psalm of Psalms:" it is, at any rate, the best known in the whole Psalter. Its title ascribes it to the great king who, if he "gave great occasion to God's enemies to blaspheme," gave also to God's servants the example of a thorough-going conversion. One need not here enter into the question whether he was really the author. The ancient, traditional opinion, involves, as we can easily see, some difficulties:[1] on the other hand, the theory that a Jewish exile is here speaking, not primarily for himself, but for the whole captive people, as "lamenting its previous wanderings"[2]

[1] The objection, however, founded on ver. 4, is rebutted by ver. 14, which, according to A.V. and R.V., represents the speaker as guilty of the greatest of all wrongs against his neighbour.

[2] Reuss. Surely the hypothesis of national personification need not be invoked when the personal experience of a penitent sinner, whoever he was, will simply explain the terms used.

from the right path, will appear to most English Christians, who have been in the habit of using the "Miserere," at once unnatural and needless. The spirit of individual repentance pervades and accounts for the whole of that prolonged cry for pardon and cleansing, which rings through seventeen verses, until it dies away, so to speak, in the assurance, "A broken and contrite heart Thou wilt not despise." We cannot wonder that St. Athanasius recommended this Psalm particularly for one who wished "to confess sins:" that in more than one elaborate scheme of psalmody, it has formed an unvarying element of the weekday morning office;[1] that our own Prayer Book orders two of its clauses to be said twice a day as versicles, and the whole of it to be said by priest and people, kneeling, on that first day of the Lenten fast to which are assigned the rest of the seven psalms termed specially Penitential.

"Miserere mei, Deus!" The "wailing strain," as it has been called by an eloquent Irish Bishop,[2] "beats into heart and memory" and conscience, in various forms, the two great ideas of sin and of forgiveness;—of sin, as a definite revolt against the all-holy will of the Highest, — of forgiveness, as

[1] At the beginning of Roman Ferial Lauds. In Sarum it followed the Preces in Ferial Lauds. It is in the Eastern Matins.

[2] Bishop Alexander, Bampton Lectures, p. 112.

carrying with it the gift of interior purification. There is no real opposition between the attitude of conscience in presence of moral law, and its attitude in presence of a personal Moral God. If, in the order of ideas, we begin by recognising the authority of the law of righteousness, we go on to see that authority as resident in the Holy One: the voice to which we listen is felt, the more that we do listen, to be speaking in personal tones to us as persons,[1] and gradually brings home to us the complete religious idea of sin,—as something different from a wound to self-respect, from a failure to reach one's own standard, from a crime which society and its laws can punish. This deep, austere, exacting conception of sin, which so many in our day put aside as morbid, unnatural, or chimerical, while others are content to call it overstrained, is driven by Scripture straight down into the soul,—is treated as "the first reality of spiritual consciousness in communion with the Supreme Power." Our own experience may testify to this fact; for it is when we feel the reality of sin most, that we feel the personality of God most; and conversely. "Thou hast set our sins in the light of Thy countenance." "Now mine eye seeth thee, therefore I abhor myself." And so, in this heart-

[1] Wace, Christianity and Morality, p. 200 ff.

penetrating psalm; "Against Thee, Thee only,"—that is, in the language of Scripture, "Thee supremely, Thee ultimately, Thee as being what Thou art, the Infinite Moral Perfection"—"I have sinned . . . in Thy sight,"—that is what I feel most,—in Thy sight, more than in the sight of my fellow-men, "I have sinned."[1] The penitent's own conscience vindicates the Supreme judgment: God must needs condemn his sin. He recognises, moreover, the corruption which is innate in him, and of which his sin is the fruit: and then, by a significant transition, he dwells on one indispensable requirement for all who would secure God's mercy, and with it the joy and gladness of His pardoned ones,—"truth in the inward parts," in the deepest recesses of moral life, in whatever most essentially makes the man. "Truth in the inward parts." "This," the penitent frankly confesses, "Thou desirest, requirest; this Thou wilt have; without this, all attempts to come near Thee, to stand well with Thee, are worse than vain, are even an insolent mockery." In other words, the first thing to be done is to be quite ingenuous with God. It is not, perhaps, inapposite to observe the emphasis with which Scripture enforces the duty of truthfulness: one need not repeat a long string of texts; we remember

[1] Cp. Bishop Perowne on this verse.

that one condition of abiding, as the Psalmist puts it, on God's holy hill is, to speak the truth from the heart; the "false tongue" is condemned; "guile" is associated with general wickedness; the "teller of lies" is not to tarry in the sight of the good Israelite. The precept is reiterated by a prophet, and taken up by an Apostle,—"Speak truth every man to his neighbour:" as St. Paul has said shortly before, we are to "speak the truth in love."[1] St. John contrasts "him that doeth evil" with "him that doeth the truth," and adds "all liars" to the roll of those whose portion, self-chosen, must needs be "the second death."[2] Is it not strange and sad that, in the face of such passages as these, good men who were to wield vast ethical influence should have drawn up a list of seven mortal sins, and yet have left out falsehood?[3]

But, leaving that point, we can all see how this steady systematic insistence on veracity illustrates the "requirement," equally conspicuous throughout Scripture, of "inward truth" in the soul's intercourse with its Creator and Judge, who "trieth the heart

[1] Cp. Ps. xv. 2; lii. 5; lv. 11, ci. 7; Zech. viii. 16; Eph. iv. 25, 15.

[2] John iii. 20, 21; Rev. xxi. 8.

[3] Cardinal Newman, far otherwise, makes "inveracity" one of "the three offences against the Majesty of God;" the others being impurity and cruelty. Grammar of Assent, p. 412.

and reins." It is as if He said, "I expect you to be true and honest in all your dealings with others; and therefore I may well expect you to be true and honest in all your dealings with Me." Let us glance for a few moments at four aspects of this solemn obligation—or, which comes to the same thing, at four possible ways of ignoring or evading it.

1. To take the most obvious point first; "truth" is required in our confessions of sin. This is urged in the very outset of our service; we are not to "dissemble or cloke" our transgressions, but to state them plainly, and refrain from all false excuses. "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God, and thus and thus have I done."[1] It is quite possible, it is far too easy, when we profess to repent—when we join, for instance, in the General Confession,—to gloss over in our minds what we suspect to be the worst part of our case. If we do not say, we think, or try to think, "I was led away by influences which I could not well resist; the circumstances were so very peculiar; I got somehow into a lax set; my own temperament predisposed me to yield;" and so on, and so on, in all the various forms in which we can repeat the attempts of Adam and Eve, of Aaron, of Saul, and of Pilate, to minimise an incon-

[1] Josh. vii. 20.

venient responsibility. "It was not I, in the ultimate sense; it was some one else, or something else, that put the temptation in my way, that gave me of the tree, beguiled me, or caused the gold to come out in the shape of this calf;[1] it was the people that did it, not I; see, I can wash my hands, I am innocent of the blood!" Let us put away all that; it is falsehood in the inward parts that would make us speak or think so. Let us own that we have fallen when we might have stood firm by leaning on God's all-sustaining grace. Let us profit by the experience of the Psalmist, who found no real peace until he said, "I will confess my sins." That will make a clean breast of it; we shall have taken the critical first step; we shall have done our best to be true.

2. Again, we are often tempted to be "false in the inward parts" by putting off the duty of looking well into ourselves. There is something wrong, we have reason to know, in our moral or spiritual accounts; but we had rather not examine them. Bishop Butler has enlarged upon this point; it is from him that I take the illustration. "It is not," he says, "uncommon for persons who run out their fortunes, entirely to neglect looking into the state of

[1] See Bishop Phillips Brooks, Sermons in English Churches, p. 46 ff.

their affairs,—and this from a general knowledge that the condition of them is bad."[1] To bring this thought home; it is not quite comfortable to ask one's self, "What did I do with this or that opportunity of saying the right word, or making the right choice? Why did I not use it? Why did I seem to acquiesce in what I knew quite well to be evil?" Ahab omitted to consult the prophet whose plainness of speech he hated and feared; he was therein a type of the temper which leads a man to put himself out of the way of healthful counsel, to avoid whatever would force his conscience to speak out. He feels that self-examination on certain points will make him uncomfortable. A certain train of thoughts came into his mind, he hardly knows how; and he prefers not to scrutinise that "how," or to think seriously of what the thoughts led to; it was an ugly thing, but it is past. "Let bygones, then," he says, "be bygones,"—forgetting that "bygones" have a way of coming up. In this way, and often for want of opening their minds to some good spiritual adviser, or, at any rate, to some faithful elder friend, persons drift into a sort of placid theorizing which persuades them that they need not be very particular, that they will come right somehow, that self-searching

[1] Sermon x., on Self-deceit.

does but feed an over-scrupulous, and therefore an unhealthy temper of mind. And so, for want of a little brave sincerity, they lapse contentedly into self-ignorance, which is falsehood in those who have refused, by neglecting, the means of really knowing their own state.

3. Or, when we have been strongly moved by a sense of spiritual realities, or even wound up to a resolution in the direction of some self-sacrifice, the inward want of real sincerity will betray itself in the entertainment of a notion, and then a correspondent half-wish, that the impression thus made might become less constraining in new circumstances, or that some inducement to the favourite evil which has been renounced might be so powerful as to make abstinence practically impossible, and carry us off, by a kind of force, to the perilous ground which we had promised to avoid. And the next step, of course, is to bring such circumstances into action.

4. Once more, it is of the last importance to avoid all forms of that subtle and complex vice which our Lord condemns as hypocrisy. In this respect He does but repeat substantially what He says elsewhere about the "single eye"—that is, the "perfect heart," the pure, simple, loyal intention, as of one who really

desires to be honest with God, to have no reserved points in his intercourse with Him, to treat Him as "Lord and owner of all that he is."[1] If a person comes short of this, he may do a good deal that is in itself praiseworthy; he will go, as it has been well said, "round about his duty," but not fairly close up to it; and therefore the right things which he will do will not constitute true rectitude of character. Remember what the great teacher already referred to has said about "making compositions," or, as we should now say, compromises, with God; "obeying" some "of His commands, but as to others" making a sort of compensation, in "ways which shall not contradict" the favourite pursuit, the drift and bent of the will.[2] Remember, also, that conscience can be "tamed:" I use the phrase of a profound observer, who some years ago was a teacher in high place among us. "The Pharisees," he says, "converted their conscience into a manageable and applauding companion."[3] So people who have no notion of doing without a sense of duty, or without religion, can project themselves into a sphere of moral or religious considerations, and make use of them, believing them, in a sense, to be

[1] Newman, Sermons, v. 234, 247.

[2] Butler, Sermon vii.; cp. the Sermon on Jan. 30.

[3] Mozley, University Sermons, p. 40. Cp. Bishop Creighton's "Cardinal Wolsey," p. 188, on the conscience of Henry VIII.

true, but really determined by very different motives. Thus self takes credit for being religious, because it employs religion; or moral, because it keeps a private morality. An English poet of a past age, who, if sometimes homely as a poet, is often great as an analyst of character, describes a bargain between the wishes and the conscience.[1] She is to tolerate this, she shall not be asked to sanction that; by degrees she "grows less attentive," takes alarm less "quickly,"

> "And, wanting peace, reluctantly complies. . . .
> So, conscience conquered, men perceive how free,
> But not how fatal, such a state must be!"

Fatal, indeed; for here the light itself has become darkness, and, as the significant Greek proverb has it, "When water chokes, then what can wash *it* down?"[2] In the pointed language of South, the "silence of conscience is usually worse than its loudest accusations;" for it shows that conscience has "slept itself into a lethargy,"[3] from which it may awake too late. We remember how Ezekiel[4] was told what to say when certain respectable elders of Israel paid him a solemn visit. They professed, we see, to be really interested in religion; they were no unbelievers or

[1] Crabbe, Tales, No. 14: "The Struggles of Conscience."

[2] Arist. Eth. vii. 2. 10.

[3] Sermons, ii. 40, 33.

[4] Ezek. xiv. 2 ff. The passage is thrice referred to in Bishop Wilson's Sacra Privata, pp. 29, 196, 324.

scoffers, not they; they sat down deliberately as pupils before a teacher, to hear with reverential gravity what the prophet should say in the name of the Lord. They would, probably, have been willing enough to receive more orders, would have performed some acts prescribed to them as religious, by way of assuring themselves that they were on good terms with religion. But "their heart was divided," the "eye" of their soul was not "single;" they did not want to be thoroughly right with God, to put themselves absolutely into His hands; and He saw through them. They had interposed between themselves and Him some favourite sin, "the stumbling-block of their iniquity," which was an absolute barrier to real approach; they had set up idols in their heart, which engrossed the worship due to Him; and their conscience, apparently, had let them alone: they had therefore incurred the doom of the hypocrite. They were to be "answered according to their idols," to be treated as holding no relation to the true God. His light was not to be vouchsafed to them: as Balaam was bidden to go with the messengers of Balak, and Ahab to go on to Ramothgilead, so they were to be left to themselves, to their own blindness and hardness, given up to follow their own imaginations, allowed to have their will, and see what came of it. And that could

but end one way. A soul thus judicially deprived of God's grace because it will not be honest with Him, is already on the road that leads to hell.

For us, whose consciences are not thus "defiled,"[1] the way of peace and of safety, of comfort and of strength, of moral and spiritual health, of life as opposed to death, will be found in fidelity to the known will of God, which is one with the known law of duty. May He, the Searcher of hearts, with whom we cannot trifle, but in whom we can absolutely confide, enable us to fulfil this "requirement" as to "truth," increase in us the grace of "simplicity and godly sincerity," and keep us far off from the misery of a self-deceiving soul.

[1] Tit. i. 15.

SERMON XX.

THE RELIGIOUS STANDARD OF VALUE.

"Lest there be any . . . profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."—HEB. xii. 16.

THE greatest of Oxford preachers once began a sermon with the words, "I suppose no one can read" about Esau's bitter cry "without feeling some pity for him; he had expected that his father would give him his blessing, but his brother was beforehand with him and got it instead."[1] Most of those who hear the story read, and do not consider it carefully, are much disposed to sympathize with the elder brother as against the younger, when he utters that "cry" which even now, as it rings across the gulf of so many centuries, appeals irresistibly to our compassion, or when, with piteous earnestness, he asks, "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" We English people, with our "Saxon" characteristics, are very apt to prefer Esau's character to Jacob's.

[1] Newman, Sermons, vi. 15; cp. Stanley, Jewish Church, i. 46.

He seems so frank, outspoken, unsuspicious; he might be described in popular phrase as a "fine manly fellow," addicted to a robust out-of-door life, somewhat rough, thoughtless, and impulsive, but by no means devoid of the feelings of a son and a brother; for, on finding that he has grieved his parents by a Canaanitish marriage, he tries to make up for it by taking their own niece as a third wife;[1] and if, in the first anguish of a supreme disappointment, he talks grimly of a deadly revenge on "the supplanter," he meets Jacob long afterwards with a generous brotherly welcome, and is again, though less seriously, outwitted by his very unlovely craft. So, "looking on this picture and on this," they see one who, as they say, tricked his brother out of his inheritance; perhaps they ask whether it is edifying that a mean plot of the kind which imposed on Isaac should be carried out by the quiet,[2] home-staying, God-fearing brother, and should succeed: and possibly they are tempted to ask yet further, whether this has not been too often the way with pious people; whether they have not been apt to use cunning as their natural weapon against the blunt strength of those whom they are pleased to set down as worldly; whether conventional religiousness has not impaired morality

[1] Gen. xxviii. 8. [2] See margin of R.V. of Gen. xxv. 27.

by its singular proneness to patronise intrigue. At least, if Esau's advocates do not carry their questioning to this length, they say that it went very hard with him. It did go hard with him; but, on the whole, whose was mainly the fault?

Scripture answers with an emphatic austerity, which may to some minds be a stumbling-block. Before the Hebrew Canon closes, we hear the awful words, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau;"[1] a hard saying, perhaps, but explained by the text in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer is urging his readers to take heed lest any "of them should fall short of God's grace, lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble them, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or a profane person, as Esau."

"Profane," then, is the term by which, in spite of all its attractive qualities, the character of Isaac's firstborn is summarised. The reason is found in that earlier part of the brothers' history,[2] which one might well wish to hear read as a Sunday lesson, since, without it, the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis cannot be at all understood.

"Watch by our father Isaac's pastoral door;"[3] it

[1] Mal. i. 2, 3. [2] Gen. xxv. 29-34.
[3] Christian Year, Second Sunday in Lent.

is the end of a day's hunting; Esau comes home from the field, weary and hungry; he sees the bowl of red pottage, or soup, in Jacob's hands; he craves for some, he begs Jacob to "feed" him, for he is "faint;" Jacob characteristically—for his faults are obvious, and severely were they visited on him—insists on a *quid pro quo:* "Sell me this day thy birthright." The birthright of the firstborn entailed the headship of the patriarchal family, and the peculiar dignity of the heir of the "friend of God," in whom would be impersonated the covenant-relations between the Lord and the seed of Abraham. A glorious future for the mind that could duly estimate it; but this was just what Esau, especially at that moment, could not do. He could only think of immediate physical needs; they seemed to him overpowering, the birthright seemed but remotely important; something tangible, however homely or common-place, outweighed, with him, a privilege which he had never trained himself to value. "Behold," he said, with boyish exaggeration, "I am at the point to die, and what good shall this birthright do me?" While he was in this mood, a mood most natural to one of his disposition and habits, Jacob clenched the bargain, "Swear unto me." And Esau bound himself, accordingly, by a solemn pledge to renounce the rights of

the firstborn; in consideration of which he got what he wanted. There is a deep irony in the calm narrative of what happened: "Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright."

It was the act of one who had in him that disregard for the claims of things sacred, which constitutes the essence of profaneness. Esau's temper was, like Saul's, "of the earth, earthy," or, as we now say, purely secular. Both represent a type of character which may have many of the elements of popularity, many amiable or estimable qualities, but nothing of what Scripture calls faith, no real interest in the spiritual and the unseen.[1] High spirits, good nature, a placable generosity, a fondness for "manly exercises," a fearless gallant bearing, a frankness of speech which, at any rate, scorns all slyness,—these are well enough in their way, but are, after all, a poor outfit for a child of the great covenant, in which are gathered up the hopes of a world. They are "ruined and rendered useless" for any high purpose, by "fickleness, unsteadiness, want of faith and want of principle, wayward and selfish worldliness."[2] And so the

[1] See Newman, Sermons, iii. 35.

[2] Cp. Stanley, Jewish Church, i. 49.

elderborn of the chosen seed passes out of the line of the sacred history, and becomes the father of that "proud and terrible" race, the dwellers in the "strong rock-city," whose sullen hatred of Jacob's posterity became actively savage when it had shaken off their yoke.[1] And if "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," are not Esau's spiritual offspring "as the stars of heaven for multitude"?

Yes, Esau lives on, we may well say, through the ages. He does not always wear the goatskin raiment of the skilful Eastern hunter: he passes in society, often enough, as a finished English gentleman. It has been said that his bitter cry is a voice of warning to the young country squire, young officer, young college student, young business man. Are there not baptized persons, calling themselves Christians with a certain degree of sincerity, who habitually despise a birthright still more august and precious than Esau's? In a deep and tragic sense—

> "They barter life for pottage, sell true bliss
> For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;"

and then cheerily eat and drink, and rise up and go their way as if the transaction could have no

[1] Cp. Num. xx. 18; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Jer. xlix. 16; Obad. 3.

serious results. In other words, they lightly give up religious opportunities, the prerogatives of their true and blessed sonship, because they do not appreciate them, or even, in a way, dislike them as reminders of an unwelcome responsibility. They do not, we will suppose, reject Christianity as incredible; but they never allow it to be a power in their life. Their interests are all elsewhere, perhaps in a purely material region,—perhaps in a higher, but still an unspiritual sphere. In St. Paul's phrase, they live "according to the flesh." Their affections are set on things on the earth; it is taskwork to them to think of God, for they have no wish to get near Him; they would rather remain at a distance, lest He should interfere with them. What is the good, they mentally ask, of all these mystical obligations, or these tiresome scruples, or this uncomfortable strictness? Religion, they think, is an affair of taste, and they have no taste for it. A free and natural line, as they call it, by which they mean a line entirely secular, is more congenial to their temperament; therefore they take it without hesitation. "What good shall this birthright do me?" They want to do as they like, to take their own way, to be their own masters; what suits them, what they "go in for," is something that will pay in the

everyday world; it may be mere sensuous pleasure, it may be success in business, it may be good standing in a particular set, it may be social, or literary, or political advancement: any of these will seem as antitypes of "that same red pottage;" and fidelity to Christian vows and duties, or rather, let us say, to the unseen Christ, seems by comparison altogether vapid and dull. The old bargain is again struck, the pottage is eagerly swallowed, and the man goes away, feeling much the better for it, — well pleased that he has taken a common-sense course, — but bearing all unconsciously on the brow of his soul the awful and perhaps ineffaceable brand, "A profane person, like Esau."

The day came, as we know, when Esau counted on obtaining his father's benediction. However much we may condemn the device by which Rebecca, and Jacob as tutored by her, defeated this light-minded hope, — a device, indeed, which implied a want of faith, as well as a want of duteous feeling, — we must remember that had Esau been successful, he would have indirectly cancelled, in Jacob's absence, the contract which he himself had made, and confirmed by an oath; in which case Jacob, not Esau, would have been the injured party. For the blessing evidently went with the birthright; and Esau wished

to "have it both ways," to despise at will, and at will to resume; which could not be. Something like a blessing he could win from his "old fond father," but not the benediction belonging to the heir; that was forfeited, and no "fruitless tears" could win it back. In this sense "he found no place of repentance." And so it is with some who, after having rejected religion as a guide, desire in later years to get her back as a comfort. If there is anything like penitence in them, it cannot undo the results of protracted indifference; the blessing of true peace, the joy of a soul in union with its Lord, are not to be reckoned upon whenever men choose to demand them. If a lifelong despiser of the Christian birthright is accepted at the last, is "saved, yet so as through fire," it may well be at the cost of a hard struggle with evil habits, of dimness overclouding the spiritual vision, of bitter and agonizing bursts of self-reproach. And if there is no real penitence, no conversion of heart and will to the Father, but only a selfish desire to deaden the pangs of compunction and recover something like ease of mind, the very condition of acceptance is wanting, and the man dies, as he had lived, "profane."

The moral of this ancient story is surely simple enough, and apposite in regard to our own present

condition. We see how much turns on our being able to value things according to Christ's standard; to judge truly as to what is worth choosing, and what is decisively to be refused as worthless. "Will this or that step be advisable? It seems to promise well for success in life; yes, but does it not require some deviation from the Gospel law of conduct? If I form this or that connection, shall I find no difficulty in adhering to my religious habits? Will it not be expected of me to keep my principles in the background, and conform to the 'time-spirit' when I cannot pretend to think it Christian?"[1] Such are the questions which a faithful soul will ask, resolving to abide by their true answer. For it looks beyond the immediate advantage, or, it may be, the immediate gratification, to the days which will follow, and to the last day of them all. The pottage, pleasant or refreshing as it may be, will soon be eaten and done with; but the sale of the birthright cannot so easily be undone. A servant of Christ will make it his rule to test all weights in the balances of the sanctuary; he will honestly endeavour to call that good which Christ calls good, and that evil which Christ calls evil; he will regard nothing as really expedient or profitable which interferes, or which is even likely

[1] Rom. xii. 2.

some time to interfere, with loyalty to that Master in whose service alone is true liberty and happiness; he will pray, with intense and self-distrusting earnestness, to be kept within the lines of faith and reverence, to be saved from the bargains and the losses of the profane.

SERMON XXI.

THE RETURN OF THE PENITENT.

"He arose, and came to his father."—Luke xv. 20.

If any of us were asked to name that one of our Lord's parables which seemed to be the richest in Divine tenderness, we should all select the parable of the Prodigal. St. Augustine says that to hear it read "in the solemn service of God's house" brought the tears into his eyes;[1] and several allusions to it in Shakspeare show the deep impression which it made on the minds of our fathers, and from two of these we gather that it was sometimes depicted on bedroom walls.[2] We may well regret that it is not included in any Proper Lesson, nor even read as a Communion Gospel.[3] For it has been

[1] Confessions, viii. 6.

[2] Comedy of Errors, iv. 3; Merry Wives of Windsor, iv. 5; As You Like It, i. 1; 1 King Henry IV., iv. 2; 2 King Henry IV., ii. 1.

[3] In the Sarum Use, as now in the Roman, it was the Gospel for Saturday after the Second Sunday in Lent.

boldly called, "a Gospel within the Gospel;" and yet, perhaps, this is one of those terse sayings which are too epigrammatic to be comprehensively true. "The manifold wisdom of God" in Christ is too vast and complex to be set forth by any one illustration; and it is this which may account for the remarkable variety of images employed by our adorable Teacher. For instance, the idea of His Mediatorial office could not find a place within the framework of the story now before us, but is emphasized in the picture of the barren fig-tree for which the vinedresser pleaded, "Let it alone this year also;" and the action of Divine grace, as originating goodness in man by its "prevenient" movement on his will and affections, is symbolized in the two parables of the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver, which make up the first part of this fifteenth chapter of a Gospel consecrated to the immense compassionateness of our Lord. These three stories, in fact, form a series, in which He replies to the insolent cavil which affected to set Him down as an associate of loose livers, as "known by the company that He kept," and thus, *ipso facto*, disqualified for the function of a Prophet who must warn and rebuke in the Holiest Name. His mode of answering this objection is characteristic; He does not explicitly defend His own line of conduct, but

He lifts the question into a higher atmosphere by exhibiting, from two different points of view, the relation in which God condescends to place Himself, on the one hand, with those who have conspicuously fallen, on the other hand, with the men of regular life who, comparatively speaking, "need no repentance." The lost sheep is contrasted with the others that are safe in the pasture, the lost piece of silver with the others that are safe in the chest, the runaway son with the elder brother who has never abandoned his father's house. Our Lord suggests, rather than affirms, that the bearing of strictly virtuous people towards great offenders who may be reclaimed should be determined by the aspect of God Himself towards these His deeply erring children, who by their own self-will have become "His banished."[1] The first two parables exhibit the process of moral restoration on its divine side, the third on its human. In the former, grace seeks the lost; in the latter, it welcomes him. We have to combine what we see from both these standpoints.

It is not inopportune to observe that the idea of Divine forgiveness as thus extended, on true repentance, even to the chief of sinners, is criticized by modern unbelief in a spirit resembling the "murmur,"

[1] 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Unbelief can wear as broad a phylactery as the narrowest "orthodox dogmatism." It rebukes Christianity for being insufficiently sensitive on a question of the deepest moral interest. It asks, "Why all this effusive readiness to absolve? Why this haste to rehabilitate, on the easy terms of an act of contrition, those who have outraged the moral sense of society, and thus in effect to narrow the line between virtue and vice?" According to this new Pharisaism, a religion which buys converts at such a price is condemned by that higher morality that has shaken itself free of theological shackles. Well, we Christians can listen composedly to such a censure. We do not imagine that a wicked past can be utterly annulled by conversion and forgiveness, although its guilt can be effaced, and its deadly effects undone. We never ignore the pain and difficulty of a repentance which can be accounted thoroughgoing, the terrible risk of deferring it to the deathbed, or the losses entailed by a prolonged revolt from duty. We know that the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins is capable of perverse interpretations which would reduce its condition to an emotion or an assurance, would thereby take the heart out of conversion, and excuse the penitent from subsequent humiliation and self-watching. All

such notions we utterly reject; and, of course, we condemn Antinomianism in all its forms. But we know also what Christ has revealed both as to the heinousness of sin, as to the value of the soul, and as to the possibility of its purification; what a stimulus He has given to those noble adventures of charity which penetrate the haunts of depravity and debasement, in the hope of reclaiming some for whom He died; how poor the moral world would be if deprived of these aspirations and incitements, which are proved to be inseparable from belief, and therefore from theology; what winning, constraining, saving influences are secured and set in motion, to the unspeakable gain of humanity, by reliance on a God who can be invoked as a Father, and whose righteousness is of one substance with His love.

To come to the parable itself. We may pass by several questions as to the details of its imagery; and the symbolism which would find the Jew in the elder son and the Gentile in the younger is, to say the least, inadequate to the whole scope of the story, which also begins by investing the younger son with the same high privileges that were enjoyed and retained by the elder. Our Lord, we must recollect, was not at this time complained of for saying anything in favour of Gentiles, but for pre-

ferring the society of "sinners" to that of "the just." He answers by describing the just and the sinners as belonging to the same spiritual household from which the sinners had perversely departed, to which it was possible for them to return, and in which, on their return, they would receive from the great Father a compassionate welcome, but a welcome too often uncongenial to the narrow self-righteousness of the unsympathizing "just." But we may also, for the sake of concentration, omit to dwell on the warning to be drawn from the conduct of the elder brother.

Let us follow the younger son, as he stands before us in this wonderful picture of a downward progress and an upward return. What we see is a soul impatient of restraints, moral and spiritual; it wants to live in its own way, to be virtually independent of God. Or, to put the case into plain words, a young man who has been carefully brought up in a religious home, who has been sent, let us say, to a good school where religion is not shelved, who has gone on for some years, quietly and as of course, in the grooves of conformity to Christian observances, who has attended church with fair regularity, and kept up devout habits in private—suddenly asserts, by some particularly wilful act, his right to do what

he pleases. That first step may appear a small matter, but it is distinctly critical, for it involves so much. "I will judge for myself; I am man enough to be my own master; I have a right to do as other men do." He assumes that the prohibitions which he has hitherto respected are, after all, conventional; they may be useful for some natures, but he has got beyond them. What really lurks, unspoken, in his mind is, that religion interferes with him, and he will shake off its yoke. And, as the father in the story lets the graceless youth have his way, that a stern experience may teach him what will come of it, or in St. Chrysostom's language, that he might then learn "what blessings he had enjoyed while he stayed at home,"[1] so the great Father often allows His wilful children to carry out that theory of independence which is so charming to human pride, and reiterates, in effect, the doom pronounced on Rehoboam and his advisers, that by subjection to Egypt they were to learn the difference between the service of their God and the service of earthly kings.[2] "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." The hard undutiful request is granted; the younger son takes what he has got, and travels into a far country. Or, as we say, he determines to "see life," to enlarge

[1] De Pœnit. Hom. i. 4. [2] 2 Chron. xii. 8.

his experience of the world; he is not sent forth into it by his father, he breaks away from home with impatient prematureness in a spirit of unfilial self-will. Young people are every day investing their stock of activity, of interest, of inward force and spirit, in the wretched speculation of a life to be spent without God. A very thoughtful English poet has described a lad thus listening to the tempters who, as an Apostle so awfully expresses it, "promise him liberty while they are the slaves of corruption."[1]

> "Headstrong, determined in his own career,
> He thought reproof unjust, and truth severe;
> The soul's disease was to its crisis come,
> He first abused, and then abjured, his home;
> And when he chose a vagabond to be,
> He made his shame his glory—'I'll be free.'"[2]

Such a one turns his back on holy things; he drops his private prayers, he becomes markedly slack about Sunday church-going; when he does attend in God's house, he behaves as he would not dare to do before an earthly superior who had real power over him; perhaps, when he meets his pastor, he turns aside or affects not to see; one might say that he remembers to forget his religion. He drifts, perhaps he rushes, into sinful indulgence, and thinks that he thus proves himself manly. Truly, he has gone

[1] 2 Pet. ii. 19. [2] Crabbe, The Borough, Letter 12.

a long way; he is in the far country; he is wasting his substance by so "living," in St. Luke's expressive phrase, as "to save nothing;"[1] he is exhausting his powers and affections amid unworthy interests; and he thus reproduces, spiritually, the condition of the prodigal, the spendthrift, who began to be in want when his chosen abode was visited by a famine. There was one of old, who, in a sense, though only in a modified sense, re-enacted this mournful drama. He lived to become a monument of grace, an eminent saint, a teacher of vast influence; and in his "Confessions," looking back to those wild days before what is known as his conversion, St. Augustine says, "Within me was a famine of that inward food, Thyself." Yes; our souls have great capacities, deep needs, intense desires, which cannot be satisfied apart from God; if we try to fill our life without Him, to make earthly passion or secular activity suffice for us, the famine will find us out.

But the prodigal, in his extreme distress, takes menial service, work which to an Eastern would be of the meanest and hatefullest kind. He is set to feed swine, and attempts to allay the pangs of hunger from the pods of a plant on which these "unclean animals" were fed; he can get nothing

[1] Ζῶν ἀσώτως.

better; "which things, indeed, contain an allegory." Here is a baptized Christian, who has a sacramental right to call God his Father, and who nevertheless has despised the "food from Heaven," as the Israelites loathed the manna, and longed for Egyptian fleshpots. We see him "eating of the fruit of his own ways," discovering what "the pleasures of sin"[1] are worth; what bitterness comes out of them, what horrible dreariness and disgust; he "enlarges his desire as death, but cannot be satisfied;"[2] he sinks from one foul pleasure to another and yet fouler; perhaps he applies to "some one more hardened or experienced in sin, who could teach him how in some more desperate way to still his insatiable cravings;"[3] but the result is what the Psalmist calls "leanness in the soul,"[4] it seems to shrink up, its true life becomes emaciated. We may remember how the wretched profligacies in which poor Louis XV. immersed himself—originally from mere idleness and vacancy of mind—produced a gloomy weariness of life, combined with an abject terror of death. And we may well say, in the words of one who is always great on the study of the Gospels, that "if a young man, timidly beginning a

[1] Prov. i. 31; Heb. xi. 25.
[2] Hab. ii. 5.
[3] Pusey, Lenten Sermons, p. 199.
[4] Ps. cvi. 15.

course of departure from God, could but realise himself to himself, as hereafter he shall be, how low he will fall, what swines' husks he will come to, he would perhaps start back with horror and amazement; but too often he does *not* see."[1] Well for him if, even amid the swine-troughs, he comes to himself, like Manasseh in the Babylonian dungeon.[2]

For we have reached the bottom of the abyss; we can now begin to re-ascend. "The beginning of the return depends on the consummation of the misery.[3]" The prodigal looks back with a longing regret to the old familiar homestead, where the mere servants had always "bread enough and to spare. And I," he cries in anguish, "I am perishing with hunger!" Yes; the poor victim of self-will, who has thus learnt what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the Lord his God,[4] what a hideous mistake he has made, what a dead failure his fine scheme of life has come to, may often observe that many who in their own way are religious, though not in the truest filial spirit, do possess a certain amount of inward peace, which is in sharp contrast with his misery. Then the old words, so often heard in church, reassert their power; he understands what

[1] Abp. Trench, Westminster Sermons, p. 63. [2] 2 Chr. xxxiii. 12.
[3] Bengel. [4] Jer. ii. 19.

the prodigal meant by that sudden and most salutary resolution, "I will arise and go to my father; I can but try whether he will take me back on any terms; I can but throw myself absolutely on his compassion. Any place beneath the old roof, within sound of that kind voice, will be enough for me; if he still keeps me deservedly at a distance, at least he will save me from an outcast's death!"

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him." What can we add, by way of comment, to such words? First let us observe that the penitent did not delay a moment to act on his determination, "I will arise and go;" he did arise, he went. That speaks for itself. And then see how the true Father, who is in heaven, declares His Almightiness "most chiefly by showing His mercy;" He is readier to forgive than we to confess; He sees us a great way off, and meets our poor efforts, which, as we know, He has Himself prompted, with the grace which can make our penitence lasting and solid. "Out of the deep," cries the Psalmist, "have I called unto Thee, O Lord:" and forthwith comes the assurance, "With the Lord is plenteous redemption." The father in the story cuts short his son's entreaty. Before he could

utter the words, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," the order is given to bring forth the best robe, and prepare the fatted calf. As St. Chrysostom says again, "The son returned to a father who was not able to remember anything of the past, or rather, who remembered only what might move him to sympathy, pity, natural affection, and forbearance; whereby we may understand that God not only does not repel those who come home to Him, but even comes to seek them when they have gone astray." And if we, who have so much to confess, "return with a perfect and true heart" to that best and kindest of all fathers, we, too, shall be received as children who have not yet forfeited our baptismal sonship; for us, who come pleading "the Name of our salvation," there will be—we have His word for it—a full and "abundant pardon," and access to all that spiritual strength which we shall need to keep us from "turning again to folly."[1]

Do any of us admit all this, and yet feel that they are not sufficiently contrite, that they cannot take fully to themselves the language expressive of the penitent's return? Let them remember, in the first place, that what is required is not any passionate emotion, but a real act of the affections and the will,

[1] Isa. lv. 7; Ps. lxxxv. 8 (A.V.).

abhorring all sin because it is in itself a choice of evil instead of good, a revolt against the will and love of the All-good, an outrage to the Passion of the Redeemer. If we cannot get as far as this, we must be in a bad way. Perhaps our sense of the heinousness of sin is dulled by an atmosphere of outward comfort, or by a habit of tranquil self-complacency; perhaps some half-forgotten misdeed has never been more than half repented of; perhaps we have neglected to place ourselves consciously, day after day, in that awful "light of God's countenance," which exposes sin in its true character; perhaps we have not sufficiently "looked away from all else to Jesus,"[1] found in the example of His life what effectually convicts us when we think of our own, and remembered that all wilful sin is in a sense, and in its measure, a "crucifying of the Son of God afresh." Or, maybe, we have forgotten what the word "grace" enforces on us, our dependence on God for the gift of such repentance as "cuts off all moorings to evil;"[2] we have not asked Him to "take away the stony heart out of our flesh, and give us a heart of flesh, to love Him, delight in Him, follow Him, enjoy Him."[3] Repentance is not a thing so

[1] Ἀφορῶντες, Heb. xii. 2. [2] "Romola," ch. 23.
[3] Roman Orationes ante Missam, feria 5; based on Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

easy of attainment, for it means a thoroughgoing movement of the whole inward being, away from sin and towards the love and service of God; and if Christian history is rich in cases of martyrdom [1] after apostasy, of repentance not to be repented of after a hardening course of sin,[2] it also contains sad instances of a superficial and therefore an unreal repentance,[3] such as Ahab's, with the result of a latter end worse than the beginning. And as mere shallow regret is not repentance, so neither is the gloomy bitter vexation at having lost one's own self-approval, which may truly be called "the sorrow of the world that worketh death," the remorse that has often ended in despair. Let us aim at the real thing, instead of contenting ourselves with counterfeits; let us beg earnestly for power to hate our sins, to find their burden truly "intolerable," and to turn from them n good earnest; let us acknowledge that to make such a petition is itself the result of grace, and that more grace can be had for the asking,—that, if we go on entreating our Father to "create in us a new and

[1] St. Biblias, Euseb. v. 1; Pantaleon the physician; Usthazanes in Persia. Compare the end of St. Cyprian's De Lapsis.

[2] The young robber, Euseb. iii. 23; St. Afra; St. Mary of Egypt; Boccaccio, Rochester, Madame de la Vallière, Madame de Mailly in 1743.

[3] *E.g.* "Jean Sanspeur," after the murder of Louis of Orleans; Louis XV. after his fever at Metz.

contrite heart," to give us that penitence which has love for Him at its root,[1] He will in His own time keep His own promise, and number us among the children who were lost and who are found.

[1] Pusey, Lenten Sermons, p. 231.

SERMON XXII.

THE PASSION A GUARANTEE OF DIVINE PITY.

"I know their sorrows."—Exod. iii. 7.

We frequently call this day "Passion Sunday." The phrase may be even as old as English Christianity; for it occurs in the service-book[1] ascribed in substance to the great Roman bishop who sent the first missionaries to preach the Gospel to our heathen forefathers, about six centuries after Christ. It means, of course, that Passiontide is beginning. The Church, with that spiritual good sense which appears in other parts of her ritual system, has supplied us, so to speak, with the means of preparing ourselves for the contemplation of the great mystery of Divine love and righteousness: in this week which precedes the Holy Week, we may deliberately "turn aside to see" the Lord Jesus set forth with signal vividness,—

[1] "Die Dominica in Passione;" Greg. Sacram. in Muratori, Lit. Rom. Vet. ii. 47.

His Name, in St. Paul's words, written out in large characters,[1]—as the Crucified. We are taking the first steps along that solemn avenue at the end of which we discern "the wondrous Cross." This is true for us, as it was for Englishmen of earlier times: although the Prayer Book does not speak either of Passion Sunday or of Palm Sunday, yet the Epistle for this week, as we all know,—as we have just heard,—introduces the great subject of our Lord's atoning Sacrifice, and of the cleansing power of that blood by which He entered once into the heavenly sanctuary, as High Priest of the good things to come.

It may, however, be not unsuitable to the peculiar character of this Sunday if we think, for a short time, of one aspect of the Passion which belongs rather to the outskirts than to the centre. The death of a Divine Redeemer must needs be manifold in its relations to God's purposes; and those purposes must needs include much that has not yet been completely revealed.[2] We have been taught much, as it is, about the efficacy of that death, as indicated by the Scriptural imagery which speaks of our "sins" as "laid on" the Divine Victim, who "died for us" and "in our stead:"[3] we have learned that it was more

[1] Gal. iii. 1. [2] Cp. Butler, Analogy, ii. c. 4.
[3] Cp. Bp. Ellicott on 1 Tim. ii. 6, and Salutary Doctrine, pp. 75, 89.

than a perfect act of obedience or heroic self-sacrifice; that there was *that* in it which did not reside in any martyrdom, or in all martyrdoms put together, inasmuch as He "received into His sinless consciousness"[1] the whole loathsome mass of human sin as the sin of the race which He represented, and yet beyond this, endured, if but for one awful moment, the withdrawal of the sense of His Father's presence and love. And thus we dimly understand that, being personally Divine, and, at the same time, the new Head of our race, the God-Man asserted the principle of eternal righteousness, and of its claim as against human sin, by "enduring, instead of inflicting, the due penalty," as far as was possible for One Himself immaculate.[2] Well, but let us suppose that we did not know so much: let us place ourselves at the standpoint of one who is simply told that Almighty God sent His only Son to assume our manhood, to live in this world under conditions of extreme humiliation, to be rejected, slandered, persecuted, condemned, and put to a death of exceptional shame and torture. A person who learns thus much as to Christian doctrine will, at any rate, have got hold of one idea,—that, according to Christianity, there is certainly

[1] H. N. Oxenham, Cath. Doctr. of Atonement, p. 288.
[2] Dale, The Atonement, p. 392.

a remarkable correspondence between the death of the Son of God and a whole class of human experiences, familiar enough to all who know what human life is, or what it may involve.

"The evil that is in the world:" do we seriously try to estimate the scope of such a phrase, to picture the terrible realities which it represents? Take, first, what the Apostle includes under the term "vanity" or "emptiness;" that is, the failure, disappointment, ill-success, which prevails so largely in the world, to which, in his strong and startling language, "the creation has been subjected by God," though not without "hope" of being emancipated from this "bondage."[1] This covers, of course, the whole range of those phenomena in nature, which seem, as we say, to indicate a "waste, a disturbance, a fault somewhere:" but, for our present purpose, look at it as illustrated in what we call spoilt lives, as of human beings who never find an appropriate place in the world, who do not fit in with their surroundings, whose powers and affections are never properly brought out, or are withered up and stifled under wretched conditions of hopeless poverty or dense ignorance, from which, somehow, they never emerge. But there is worse than this: there is the appalling

[1] Rom. viii. 20.

enormous mass of positive suffering, physical and moral, which absolutely confounds us when we try to realise its extent. But general phrases take us only a little way: let us rather fix our minds for a moment on samples of this multifarious evil. Think of some especially dark periods of history—times of civil strife, times of barbaric invasion, times of feudal tyranny at its worst, of such hideous oppression as once in England evoked the cry of despair that "Christ was asleep;" think of "battle and murder," of religious persecution as it was carried on in Spain, of a downtrodden peasantry or of a reign of terror in France,—of the slave-trade as it was, as it still is in parts of Africa;—or come to individual cases, such as many a back street or many a hospital ward could furnish, of the struggle of poor families just to live, of the havoc wrought by a great railway "accident," of the gradual but sure advance of an inherited insanity, of pain like the agony of cancer, that makes even relatives long for the sufferer's death; or again, of solitude uncheered by human sympathy,—of bereavements which crush survivors to the earth,—of hearts that alone know their secret bitterness,—of minds never illumined, never cheered, never lifted,—of spirits enclosed, from the first dawn of

consciousness, in an atmosphere of vice, which is often but too congenial to inbred tendencies, and which keeps them in thraldom to the "flesh" which they ought to rule. Does not this verify the mournful saying of Pascal,[1] that "misery" is inseparable from that "greatness" which raises man above the beasts? Well, if unbelief in former days was apt to reproach Christianity for taking too sombre a view of human life, it has altered its tone now. It tells us that we are shirking the evidence before us, or deceiving ourselves with false consolations,—that facts dispel the fond dream of an all-good Ruler, for that one who was alike benignant and all-powerful could not allow such horrors to exist. This is really thought and said: we must take it as certain that our age—partly through a sort of resentment against suffering, partly through increase of the sympathetic perceptions, produced by culture and by a wider benevolence —has gained a specially keen sense of the sterner features of life, the contrasts of earthly destiny; and that many are being tempted into a pessimism which passionately rejects the belief in a living and moral God. And clearly a mere theist, whose deity is presumed never to speak otherwise than through nature,

[1] "Pensées," ed. Molinier, i. 65.

will have his own difficulties in replying to the pessimist: he may even be driven to the old hypothesis of a good Being limited by a co-ordinate power of evil. But look at authentic historical Christianity, with its wonderful story of a suffering Son of God. Is not that in keeping with the fact, itself mysterious, of such far-spread human suffering? The older Scriptures had said much of God's pity as attracted by man's burdens, distresses, captivities,—had even boldly employed the language of human feeling, and spoken of "the Lord's soul as grieved with Israel's misery," of a Heavenly "Father" as Himself "afflicted in all the affliction" of His earthly children;[1] but all these descriptions of a Divine regard for human sorrows were consummated in that transcendent mercy which became, so to speak, incarnate in the Crucified. In Christ, the "Man of sorrows," this condescending language of the Old Testament had become literally and absolutely true.[2] One who was Himself, in His own personality, the eternal and the changeless, had assumed a human nature, and therewith a human heart. In His Godhead He retained the whole energy of Divine benignity, while as man He gave an earnest of what was yet future by "bearing men's sicknesses" in the exercise of His healing power. He had thus

[1] Judg. x. 16; Isa. lxiii. 9. [2] See Mozley, Essays, ii. 118.

been moved with compassion for the hungry, the sick, the blind, and the bereaved; He had shed real tears over a tomb, although He was just about to revive its inmate; and now, at last, He had consummated all His manifestations of pity by accepting death for the sake of a sinful world. "That was a God to be loved indeed," as one who loved Him well has expressed it.[1] "No man can say now, What has God to do with sufferers? for God in Christ endured pain, torture, death, to the uttermost." And so we read a new title on the Cross, inscribed as in letters of fire—"I *do* know their sorrows:" we come to learn that a superabundant compensation for suffering, drawn out of the vast resources of supreme love will be insured for all who do not wilfully reject their Father and their Redeemer: and as we gaze longer at that great sight, and find out more of the interior mystery of the Passion, as we see more of what is meant by the Agony and by the cry of "Eli, Eli," we recognise in the Cross a provision for the worst evil of all, the true plague of man's heart, the clinging disease, the living death, of sin.

Here is a true "exaltation of the Holy Cross" of Christ—that it completes the revelation of the

[1] Kingsley, Good News of God, pp. 341, 345.

Divine character, that it abolishes, once for all, decisively and utterly, the remainder of doubt as to whether God cares about men. It assures us of what the Apostle calls His "philanthropy:"[1] it enables us to go to Him with the truest filial assurance, as to "a Father who pitieth His own children," pitieth them for their pains and sorrows much, for their moral perversions and defilements most of all. To Him let us draw near, whatever be our trouble, whatever our past sins, our disobedience or ingratitude; if only we desire the true comfort to lighten the trouble, the effectual "grace to cleanse" from the sin, we can obtain both from Him who "knoweth whereof we are made," and who "so loved us," so immensely, so inconceivably, that for our sakes He "spared not His own Son," and thereby assured us that "with Him He would also freely give us all things."[2]

It has been said of a great German writer,[3] who lived without God and for himself, that "he knew all the diseases of humanity,—a few alleviations,—no remedies." Christ Crucified is presented to us as *the* remedy. Has any one ever tried Him, and found Him to fail? Let ages of Christian experience give the answer.

[1] Tit. iii. 4. [2] Rom. viii. 32. [3] Goethe.

SERMON XXIII.

THE PHYSICIAN OF SOULS.

"There went virtue out of Him, and healed them all."—LUKE vi. 19.

EMINENT writers have repeatedly dwelt on the several characteristic features of the four Gospels, considered as pictures of our Saviour's life on earth, from distinct but really harmonious points of view. In fact, that ancient phrase, "the Gospel in four forms,"[1] represents a Divine provision for human needs. The Incarnation of the Eternal Son, when steadily looked at as a fact, will be felt to possess a Divine infinity: and the human character, if we may so speak, of the Incarnate, exhibits, it has been said, no "predominance" of one particular excellence, but a "balanced" combination "of all the elements of our perfected moral nature."[1] So it was that different Evangelists presented the rightful Lord of all souls in this or in that aspect

[1] St. Irenæus, iii. 11. 8.

[2] Liddon, Bampton Lectures, p. 195.

of His composite self-manifestation, and thereby met the wants and capacities of various classes of minds and hearts. For those who "clung to the forms of Old Testament piety"[1] there was a Gospel which has been called "theocratic:" for men of a practical turn, doers rather than thinkers, there was "a Gospel of action," a condensed account of energy expended in beneficent wonder-works: for souls which aspired to the contemplation of God in His mysterious relation to the spiritual life of man, which, having accepted the Christ, craved to see in Him the Divine glory as accounting for what He was, and what He did,—there was a Gospel pre-eminently doctrinal, a Gospel of the Incarnation on its Divine and human sides. But to-day, on this festival of St. Luke, we naturally think most of the third Gospel, which may be called the Gospel of the universal Redeemer; in which we see a Christ for all mankind,—the Brother of the whole human family, capable—how richly capable!—of being "touched with the feeling of" all our human infirmities: One who, as He embodies the immeasurable compassions of the Highest, can call forth from hearts that His love has moved and conquered the passionate gratitude of the much-forgiven: whose ministry, as an eloquent writer has

[1] Trench, Hulsean Lectures, p. 44.

said,[1] is full "of sweet sympathies and fruitful pardons, which open out new possibilities to the penitent;" who, "in presence of the ignorant and wandering," is "at once just and sweet, strong and gentle;" who begins His work by announcing Himself as anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, and ends it by absolving the robber who appealed to Him from a cross.

This, and yet more than this, has often been said, and will often, with good reason, be said again. But for our practical benefit, that we may effectively learn what this Gospel has to teach, something more may well be added. What is the prayer that we have made in that exquisitely touching collect, so musical in its tender and solemn emphasis, which we associate with St. Luke's day? "May it please Thee that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed." The diseases of *our souls;* there is the point. We might, not improbably, be so fascinated by the grace and sweetness of a book which the writer just now quoted distinguishes as radiant with the "beauty" of Christianity,—by its fitness for commending to outsiders with anything like moral taste or spiritual feeling, the gracious geniality and attractive

[1] Bishop Alexander, Leading Ideas of the Gospels, p. 8.

loveliness of the religion centred in the Saviour of all men,—as not to grasp, with an adequate personal apprehension, the full significance of that title, "a Physician of the soul," which we apply in our collect to Luke himself, but reserve, in the fullest sense, for Jesus, his Lord and ours. Human nature, as St. Augustine repeatedly insists, was created in a state of moral health, but through abuse of the gift of freewill it became flawed, corrupted, and disordered, so as to need the intervention of the Son of God, not merely as a Teacher or a Pattern, but as a Restorer and a Healer, as the only effectual Healer of its infirmities.[1] This office of His gives a new force to the supplication, "O Lord, heal me," and to the promise, "I will restore health to thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds:"[2] and, in view of it, we see how fitting it was that so much of our Saviour's earthly ministry should be spent in the removal of bodily ailments, when "there went virtue out of Him," when His touch, or His mere word, produced recovery.

A physician of the body has a very grave office. He must deal truly with all the facts of the case on which he is consulted. He must not be a mere speaker of soothing platitudes, he must not dwell

[1] De Nat. et Grat. s. 3, 60; de Grat. Chr. 2, 45. Cp. Serm. 156, 2.
[2] Ps. vi. 2; Jer. xxx. 17.

only on favourable symptoms: if he is to be true to his noble art, to his patient, to himself, he must sometimes urge submission to severe treatment,—must often impose disagreeable restrictions as to food, exercise, and routine of daily life,—must, in any case, require compliance with his advice, so long as he is employed and trusted. "You must give up this or that indulgence; you must live by this or that rule; you must avoid breathing the air that might cause a chill; you must diet yourself carefully, and persevere in taking medicine, and, in short, act as my patient; or else,"—he may feel obliged to say,—"or else I cannot answer for the consequences." A sensible patient understands this; and the simplest common sense should teach us that, if there are diseases of the soul, and if there is a Physician competent to remove them, the spiritual case may be illustrated by the physical. Now think of our Lord as the Healer of spiritual maladies—the blindness that cannot see truth, the dumbness that cannot pray, the fever of lawless passion, the palsy of moral weakness, the leprosy of sensual defilement; look at Him as pourtrayed for us by the beloved physician, so helpful and loyal to St. Paul, who was "called to be an Evangelist," and who, with all his pathetic tenderness, "keeps back nothing that is profitable"

merely because it may seem austere. For instance, in his report of our Lord's great sermon, he inserts a woe to those who "have received their consolation" from comforters other than the true; further on we find piercing words about "many stripes," and a separating "fire," and "a great gulf fixed," and the punishment of those who "will not have the Christ to reign over them," and the doom pronounced unsparingly, though with tears, on the city which, in her "critical time of visitation," would not "know the things that belonged to her true peace."[1]

There is, in fact, a stern side of Christian truth; and to accept it may be, for souls diseased by sin, exactly the wholesome medicine which they need. What a woeful self-deceit, to dwell on the Lord's miracles of healing,—to utter, perhaps, impressive words on the comprehensive benignity of His redemptive work,—and to forget one's own imperious need of that interior healing of which His curative miracles were a type; or, worse yet, to admit it in terms, and yet to expect that, as our Physician, He should let us prescribe the treatment He is to employ![2] "The ills that flesh is heir to" speak for themselves;

[1] Luke vi. 24; xii. 47, 49; xvi. 26; xix. 27, 41, 44.

[2] "Agit (Deus) judicio suo, nec ordinem sanandi accipit ab ægroto." St. Aug. de Nat. et Grat. 31.

our hatred of pain or discomfort drives us to seek for a cure, and as to that cure we "give place to the physician, because" we feel that we "have need of him." But it is all too easy to forget the ills of the soul. We can manage with fatal facility to ignore their existence or their seriousness. Even in physical cases, persons often persuade themselves that "nothing is much the matter," and avoid the "doctor" because his opinion, they suspect, will not be pleasant to hear, still less to act upon. Much more is this the case when there is no question of outward peril or suffering. At the outset of life, when the sense of enjoyment or of increased independence is so fresh, vivid, masterful; in middle age, if a low moral standard has been adopted, and religion is kept to all intents and purposes at arm's length; above all, in that dreariest of all conditions, a worldly old age, when the lamp of God in conscience is dying out,—it is hard for men to bring themselves to say, "Something is very wrong with my inward life; I want the Physician of the soul." But, my brethren, at all times of life that confession, in some form or other, will be opportune, even necessary. Let us not put it off. Something, if we will examine ourselves, *is* wrong: it may be something, for instance, that makes prayer a burden,

[1] Ecclus. xxxviii. 12.

that keeps us back from the Holy Eucharist, that indisposes us for the reading of the Bible, that impels us, in one way or another, to "hide ourselves from the presence of the Lord." Let us take one such "something" at a time, and so lay each at the feet of the Great Physician; perhaps we may find that what would help us best would be to confess it in the presence of one of His ministers, and so to learn more of the realities of our state, and be brought more closely face to face with the Judge who is the Absolver; but, at any rate, let us place our sick souls before Him, only taking care that we do spiritually touch Him in good earnest. Do any of us say in our hearts, that we know what their "plague" is, and have tried the Gospel remedy, but with very little success; that still, after much use of Christian ordinances, an old temptation seems as strong as ever, and falls are hardly less frequent? Well, my brethren, there may be a reason for this: we may have forgotten to look through the ordinances to the living Christ who gives them all their efficacy; we may have said our prayers punctually, but not prayed as though we meant to be heard; we may have omitted to follow up prayer by watchfulness, and so to avoid all occasions of evil: whatever be the cause, let us not lose faith; let us remember how many He has healed, and is now

healing, and be sure that He is our Christ as well as theirs. He is asking us now, each individually, "What wilt thou that I should do for thee?" Let us answer humbly and definitely—"Lord, that I may be delivered from this and from that sin. Lord, I place myself absolutely in Thy hands; Lord, undertake my case; let the virtue of Thy touch be the healing of my sickness, that I may rise up and do service unto Thee."[1]

[1] Matt. viii. 15.

SERMON XXIV.

"A WONDERFUL ORDER."

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."—LUKE xi. 2.

"SAINT MICHAEL and All Angels:" how inspiriting is the sound of the words! We may well be glad when the festival occurs on a Sunday: it leads more people to think of a great subject; we may trust that more souls than usual are lifted up into a higher atmosphere, as if "a door were opened in heaven," while their minds are led to dwell on what Scripture has revealed concerning the great company of God's unfallen children. What a splendid picture it is, that of "a vast assembly" of "myriads upon myriads of spiritual beings higher than we, but infinitely removed from God"[1]—that is, simply the creatures of His will, "mighty in strength, doers of His word," ever hearkening to His voice, unceasing in His praise, assiduous in ministering to the purposes of His

[1] Pusey, Lect. on Daniel, p. 573.

merciful economy! Theirs it was, we are told, to become "elect"[1] by a faithful use, we may gather, of their free will; and so, as St. Augustine puts it, to "receive as a reward that fulness of bliss, an incapacity of ever falling away." Theirs it is, as he says elsewhere, to be "steadfast in the eternity of their Creator, assured by His truth, and holy by His gift, partakers of His truth and of His will; never to desist from gazing on Him; ever to set themselves the one task of doing the bidding of Him on whom they gaze, and whose eternal sovereignty they obey freely because with delight."[2] We find something too, in Scripture, of their several ranks or orders: St. Paul appears, at any rate, to admit the notion of a fourfold hierarchy of office, or delegated rule, among them:[3] St. John adopts the Jewish belief as to "seven which stand" in the inmost Presence,[4] the "chief princes,"[5] or archangels; and St. Jude, following the book of Daniel, distinguishes one as "the Archangel," whose very name would serve as a protest against polytheism,

[1] 1 Tim. v. 21.

[2] De Corrept. et Grat. 27; de Civ. Dei, x. 7; de Gen. ad Litt. viii. 45; c. Faust. xxii. 27.

[3] Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16. Cp. St. Ignatius, Trall. 5.

[4] Rev. viii. 2. Cp. Tobit xii. 15.

[5] Dan. x. 13; xii. 1.

Michael—"Who is like God?"[1] This is he who, in the Epistle for this day, is depicted as if renewing, in the first triumphs of Christianity, a primeval victory over "the dragon and his angels;" he, too, of whom it has been said that "if we want to express the warrior aspect of our spiritual life," and thereby to repel the charge that Christian virtue, as such, is too gentle and too passive, "we know no nobler, no more inspiring image than that of St. Michael, captain of the great hosts of the God of Sabaoth,"[2] in whose fellowship we, too, as the old hymn has it, are called to fight "against the king of pride."[3]

Yes, it may be said, this is magnificent symbolism; it is the poetry of Scripture, "ascending the brightest heaven of invention," and really valuable as representing, in vivid figures, the inherent pre-eminence, the predestined ultimate ascendency, of good over evil, of the noble over the base. People often look at the image or picture of St. Michael "trampling the Apostate's pride,"[4] and take genuine and pure pleasure in it, as an "ever-blessed, ever-welcome

[1] See Mill, on Mythical Interpr. of Gospels, p. 125 ff; Pusey on Daniel, p. 520; Godet. Studies on Old Test., p. 15, E. tr.

[2] Holland, Logic and Life, p. 261.

[3] "Te, splendor et virtus:" hymn for first vespers of Michaelmas in Roman Breviary.

[4] Lay of the Last Minstrel, ii. 11.

symbol" which makes the imagination glow with faith and hope, and grateful triumphant sympathy, —a "visible reflection of the final triumph of the spiritual over the animal and earthly part of our nature:"[1] but they do not always go on to think of it as having a basis of fact in the unseen world. Or, in recoil from speculations which have run beyond warrant, or from anything like "worshipping of angels,"[2] persons may simply dismiss the subject from their minds as if fraught with a subtle danger. And yet, if we read, I do not say the older Scriptures, or the records of the Patmos-vision, but the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, with serious fairness, we shall certainly find that they assume a doctrine about angels, and that they claim for it the sanction of our Lord. They do not merely tell us of occasions on which the presence and power of these glorious spirits were connected with some great crisis in the spiritual history of mankind. They tell us, besides, that we, Christians of all ages, have an interest in the fact that angels exist, and are mysteriously active for the good of those whom they own as "fellow-servants."[3] We are not allowed

[1] Mrs. Jameson, Sacred and Legendary Art, i. 101.

[2] Martensen recognises the "onesidedness" of the "later Protestantism" in this respect (Christian Dogmatics, Eng. tr., p. 134).

[3] Rev. xxii. 9.

to think of this whole subject as merely belonging to far-back ages: it is plainly written that the angels "minister to those who shall inherit salvation;"[1] even our Lord, in the moments of His deepest self-abasement, condescended to be "soothed by a creature's aid," to receive comfort through "the Angel of the Agony:"[2] we have it from His own lips that they rejoice whenever any one of us repents of sin, and is "found" after being "lost:"[3] and His warning in this day's Gospel, "not to despise any of these little ones," is emphasized by the assurance that "in Heaven their angels always behold the face of His Father,"[4]—that is, that the majestic beings who thus enjoy the vision which is truly beatific are patrons and guardians of "children and childlike souls."[5] Nor is this all. Our Lord has, in effect, commanded us to think of the angels, as possessing moral character in its highest creaturely perfection, whenever we repeat His own prayer; He has implicitly instructed

[1] Heb. i. 14. [2] Newman, The Dream of Gerontius.
[3] Luke xv. 10. [4] Matt. xviii. 10.
[5] Christian Year, Advent Sunday. On "guardian angels," St. Chrysostom, quoting Matt. xviii. 10, says, "Every faithful man has an angel," in Col. Hom. iii. 3; compare his comment on Acts xii. 15: and see also Origen, De Orat. 11. Clement of Alexandria gives this inference with a "perhaps," Strom. vi. 157. In v. 91, he speaks generally of "oversight exercised towards us by means of angels who are set over us." See Bishop Ken's Evening Hymn.

us that they, in their sphere, so truly do the will of the Father, as to be a pattern for us in our own.

And should it be difficult for Christians to take these statements as they stand, to keep their feet out of the track of the Sadducees, and thus to avoid the results to which it would bring them in regard to the authority of their Master Himself? Even if we had never heard of such texts, had never come across others more or less like them, had never considered the full significance of the Ascension of the Son of man into "heavenly places," we might still see reason to believe that the ascending scale of beings would not stop with such as we are,[1] but would rather continue upwards, so that above us might be pure spirits, far excelling us in knowledge and power, as well as in goodness, and also that they might be in some true relation with us, as we are in relation with the creatures which are below us. We ought not, then, to stumble or draw back from the Christian doctrine of angels, but rather to accept it as unfolding certain aspects of a momentous spiritual reality.

It was a deep, rich mind, the mind of a great religious thinker, which poured out some of the

[1] Liddon, University Sermons, ii. 152; Godet, Studies on Old Test., p. 2 ff. Cp. Bishop Bull, Serm. xi.

stateliest eloquence contained in the "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity," under the inspiration of this august and attractive theme. Nor was it Hooker's way to luxuriate in fanciful speculation beyond the lines which Scripture had traced out: for him the subject had an essentially moral interest; it supplied him with a fresh illustration of the great idea of an all-pervading Order, representing the will and the character of the All-righteous. Angels, he says,[1] work by a law, and observe it so well that "our Saviour," when "setting down the perfect idea of that which we are to pray and wish for on earth, did not teach us to pray or wish for more than only that here it might be with us as with them it is in heaven." And so he goes on to reduce the angelic activity to "three kinds,—love, arising from the apprehension of the purity, glory, and beauty of God; adoration, grounded upon the evidence of His greatness; and imitation, bred by the presence of His exemplary goodness." They have a law, he adds, pertaining to "each of them severally;" a law pertaining to all of them "as an army, one in order and degree above another;" a law, again, pertaining to them as "having communion with us," and thereby "bound to works of ministerial employment." And all their "functions are by them

[1] Hooker, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, i. 4. 1, 2.

performed with joy," because of the absolute union between their will and the will of the Highest.[1] One sees well enough how it was that when, some fourteen years after writing thus, Hooker lay dying on that autumn morning in 1600, his thoughts, as he confessed, were dwelling on "the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven,—and oh that it might be so on earth!"[2]

We can well imagine how he must have entered, year after year, as Michaelmas came round, into the luminous depths of that inexhaustible collect, which we too have been offering up this day:[3] "O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order!" What a solemn melody there is in the words! how they infuse, at once, a sense of awe and of exultation! how they make us feel that we are standing in the midst of great mysterious forces,—of a vast "scheme imperfectly comprehended," which "reacheth from one end to another mightily, and sweetly ordereth all things."[4]

[1] "Angelus beatus non potest velle vel agere, nisi attendens ad Deum." S. Tho. Aq. Sum. i. 62. 8.

[2] Izaak Walton, Life of Hooker.

[3] In his time the words ran, "of *all* angels," etc.

[4] Compare the Roman collect for "the Feast of Holy Angels Guardian:" "Deus qui *ineffabili* providentia sanctos angelos tuos ad nostram custodiam mittere dignaris," etc.

The idea of order,—that is the first thought; it comes down upon our levity, on our waywardness, with a calmly imperative pressure, even as St. Paul rebuked those restless egoists at Corinth by reminding them that "God was not the author of confusion," and that all the arrangements of the Church, which was His house, must be stamped with this mark of "seemliness and order;"[1] even as, in the days of His flesh, our Master caused the recipients of His miraculous bounty to be arranged "in ranks of hundreds and fifties,"—took care that the upper room in which He was to institute His "wonderful Sacrament" should be duly furnished with carpeted couches,—and, even in the moment of quitting the sepulchre, left the face-cloth folded up by itself.[2] It helps us to sympathize with, to put a religious sense on, those modern scientific enforcements of the idea of law and order, as pervading the scheme of the universe, which need not, and ought not, to shut out the presence of a personal Will expressing itself in both. But, then, this order of which the collect speaks is an order of service; it is illustrated by the terms of that brief parable in which our Lord compares Himself to a householder who has "given authority to his

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40.
[2] Mark vi. 40, xiv. 13; John xx. 7.

servants, and to every one his proper work."[1] Angels and men alike are servants to Him; and each of us, as a servant, has his own work to do, his own place to fill, distinct from other places, assigned to him specifically, and involving a responsibility which he can never throw off upon any one else. Let us put it closely to ourselves; "I am where God has willed that I should be; He has appointed for me my own work; in it I am to play my part as His servant; about it He will reckon with me: am I acting as if this were so?" And if we want to get hold of what will strengthen and inspirit us, let us remember that our work is marked out for us, not by the sheer will of an arbitrary and unsympathizing master, but by a Love which well understands us, its own creatures, on whom it rests with a discriminating regard, which, even amid the bliss of Heaven itself, even amid the "Tersanctus" of the angels, longs that we may so behave ourselves in its service as to find therein the perfection of true liberty.

But, thirdly, this ordered service, in which we are to do our part, as made in this respect but "little lower than the angels," is, as the collect reminds us, twofold. The angels serve God in heaven, and succour and defend us on earth. It is the union of worship

[1] Mark xiii. 34.

with activity. As St. Augustine says, "The angels have their contemplation *and* their action."[1] They always behold the face of the Father; yet they speed, as Spenser has it, on His errands "to succour us, that succour want." Elements which, in Christian history, have sometimes fallen apart, are in their "service" combined, and should be so in ours. Worship and work must go together: neither must be substituted for the other. Worship, no doubt, is called service in a special sense; do we always think of our words when we talk of going to the Church "service," on Sundays or on week days? The term bears witness to the obligation of rendering to our Creator and Lord that homage which is due to Him. When we worship seriously and earnestly, we do, in this sense, "serve" Him; and the thought that when we come into church, we are then personally coming before His throne, ought to act as a safeguard, at least to some real extent, against irreverent carelessness of gesture or listless acquiescence in distraction. If well-intentioned persons were careful to remember this, we should certainly see more actual kneeling in our churches. But then let devotion, in the form of prayer or praise, be kept real and healthful, and saved from the peril of hypocrisy

[1] C. Faust. xxii. 27.

by being made fruitful in practical obedience, in loyal discharge of each day's appointed duty. And in special imitation of those who do God's will "in heaven" with such adoring love, such continuous intensity, such thoroughgoing fidelity, and in their ministrations "on earth" with such unselfish, unjealous, and cordial beneficence towards fellow-servants who are so far beneath them, who can neither observe nor reward their attendance,—let us "redeem" every "occasion" of being kindly, helpful, brotherlike, to those who are round about us, and particularly to those who are like "little ones" in their exceptional weakness or need, whether bodily or spiritual, and who probably can never "recompense" us,—remembering whose they are, and who has promised to reckon what is done for them as done for His own adorable Person.[1] Yes, and when temptation waxes hot, when a godless freedom allures, when evil asserts itself against the law of goodness, which is one with the will of the Father, let us take the right side in that awful ceaseless conflict amid those who fight, in Divine strength, against the Dragon, and over whom the Dragon "prevaileth not," because above them waves the banner of the King.

We are brought near, "in Christ," to "the city of

[1] Matt. xviii. 5.

the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."[1] Let us take their service as a pattern for our own, and do justice to both parts of it. This purpose will give meaning to the prayer which He has taught us to offer, and wholeness, and therefore acceptableness, to that self-consecration which He asks, with such good right, at our hands, who has spent upon us nothing less than His whole self, that He might make us entirely His for ever.

[1] Heb. xii. 22.

SERMON XXV.

CHRIST THE ONE FOUNDATION.

"Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious."—1 PET. ii. 6, 7.

ST. PETER, when arraigned before Annas and Caiaphas, had reminded them of that passage in the Psalter which speaks of a stone cast aside by the builders as unfitted for their purpose, but afterwards, by the Lord's own act, chosen out to be "the head of the corner."[1] The sacred irony of this contrast had evidently taken hold of his mind. In the context of the passage before us, he has been referring to that passage in combination with one of Isaiah's,[2] and applying both to the Lord Jesus, as identified with that Lord of whom another Psalmist had said, "O taste and see that the Lord is gracious." He now quotes from Isaiah, applying the title of "corner stone" to his Master, just as St. Paul says, in two

[1] Ps. cxviii. 22. [2] Isa. xxviii. 16.

passages, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ," and again, "Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone."[1] There is an old hymn commonly used in the services of a Dedication festival, in which the Apostolic interpretation of the prophet's language is taken up into an exultant strain:—

> "Christ is made the sure foundation,
> Christ the head and corner-stone,
> Chosen of the Lord, and precious,
> Binding all the Church in one."

What does this ancient and sacred image, thus borrowed by St. Peter and St. Paul from the stores of Hebrew prophecy, convey to us Christians? When Isaiah was drawing near to the close of his public life, a worldly and irreligious party had risen to influence and temporary command in the kingdom of Judah. Their aim was to strengthen it by a secular policy, with an Egyptian alliance for its basis. Their thoughts, if put into modern shape, would run somewhat as follows: "Judah must be set free from the bondage of a narrow clerical interest: it is essentially a kingdom, existing side by side with other kingdoms; its needs, its emergencies, are like theirs; it must, perforce, do as they do. It must

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 20.

therefore shake off the tyranny of meddlesome preachers, who can only look at secular matters from their own theological point of view, and pretend to school practical men like children, with a dull iteration of precept upon precept. We have outgrown all that; it is time for common sense to reign. We know how to make safeguards for the throne and for the country, which will enable us, so to speak, to be on friendly terms with death, exempt from the peril of destruction; when 'the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come to us.'" Isaiah turns round upon them as the minister of Him who scorneth the scorners. "No," he says, "your hopes are vain; your 'covenant with death' shall be cancelled; your hiding-place is 'a refuge of lies,' and the hail-storm and the rising flood will sweep it away. The scourge, when it comes,—and come it will, again and yet again, as morning follows morning, with terror in the mere report of it,—will simply trample you down. But I will tell you where a refuge can be found: there is a stone laid by God for a sure foundation, a stone tried and precious;—he that trusteth to it shall not make haste, shall not be shaken from his foothold." This refers first to that sacred character of the house of David, which belonged to it as destined to culminate in David's future pre-eminent

Son, and in the fuller sense to that Son in His own Person, as realising all that could be indicated by the glorious titles of "the Emmanuel, the Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God." Because He was one day to appear, the pious in Judah would rest their hopes and stay their souls on Him. And this should be, in a far more effective sense, the experience of those who know the Christ as having come. It is a pregnant truth which is symbolized in this vivid illustration. The fact is, and human nature bears witness to it, that man needs something on which to rest, something whereon to build up his inner life; it must be trustworthy as a foundation, too solid to crumble when other foundations are dissolved. Unless he has lost all faith in moral and spiritual realities, he knows that such a basis must exist for him somewhere; he cannot but ask where it is; and we Christians cannot but answer, "In Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son of God, who suffered for our salvation, rose again, and is at the right hand of the Father." We bid him by no means abandon his hopes, but only give them a right direction; we do but warn him that to arrange and organize his true life apart from God in Christ is to trust in a refuge of falsehood; or, to adopt the imagery of another prophet, it is like "forsaking the Fountain of living waters, to hew out for one's self broken

cisterns that can hold no water."[1] Let the soul turn to Him whom God has fixed as the Corner-stone, whom all generations of believing Christians have tried and never found wanting, whose preciousness is attested by the experience of all saints. That Stone is indeed fatal to those who "stumble at it, being disobedient;" they imitate the men of Isaiah's day, to whom in their perversity the Lord of Hosts was for a rock of offence, at which they stumbled and fell, and were broken:[2] but this was contrary to His own gracious intentions; and the believer, "built up and stablished" in Christ, "will not be confounded in the perilous time."

Let us consider briefly a few of the senses in which He makes good this title of Corner-stone.

How, do we think, did the first preachers to the heathen win converts? By appealing to men's deepest sense of need; to the felt necessity of a centralising, consolidating principle for human life. "The Apostles," it has been said, "appealed to men's hearts . . . to their secret belief in a superintending providence, to their hopes and fears thence resulting; and they professed to reveal to them the nature, personality, attributes, will, and works of Him whom their hearers ignorantly worshipped."[3]

[1] Jer. ii. 13. [2] Isa. viii. 14, 15. [3] Newman, on Justification, p. 269.

1. Two things, at least, we must secure, if life is not to be a failure. One is, something certainly true, a truth to stand by amid uncertainties. As we advance in our earthly journey, perplexities gather round on all sides: life has not verified our first expectations; it raises questions which it does not answer; there is a confusion and discord of theories; but where is that which we can depend upon, and grasp firmly, looking life and death in the face? The answer is in the words of Jesus, "I am the Truth." Men who had tasted of His fulness could tell their brethren that to believe on Him was to feel firm ground under their feet. And the experience of all these centuries bears witness to us, that, whatever else is false, Christ is the truest of the true; that if we trust Him, He will explain life to us—yes, and death also, and eternity. The Christian faith has Him, the living and personal Christ, for its Object; and His character is the most persuasive evidence of His religion. Thus, as the Truth Incarnate, into which all truths run up, He is the foundation on which men craving for reality may build up their lives without misgiving; they can say with St. Peter, "We have believed and we know."

2. Again, man also needs a power of moral and spiritual rectification. He wants to be cleansed from

his own unholiness, relieved of his own sense of guilt. Otherwise, he cannot build in peace; how should he? Life, to be worth having, must be life with a quiet conscience. To be sure, some men stifle this craving, or tell themselves that it is illusory or artificial; but the real genuine heart of human nature knows well that the burden of all burdens is the sense of sin without any assurance of anything that can take it away, and enable the soul to live at peace with itself and with God. And then, from the garden and the Cross, and the sanctuary of heavenly mediation, comes the voice of Him who bore our sins in His own body, and to whom we can pray by the virtue of His death: "Come unto Me, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Believers in Christ have found it. To them He is all-precious, because He can and does help them to become pure and single-hearted, high in aim, and active in duty.

These two great questions well answered by the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Master and Saviour of the soul, one sees how, also, in His relation to the several doctrines and institutions of His Kingdom, He sustains the character of the One Foundation.

(1) It is so in regard to doctrines; for creeds and other doctrinal formularies have their value from the fact that, so far as they are in accordance with

Scripture and with the faith once delivered, they help us to form a more distinct conception of His Person and His work. He is the great Object whom they set before us; all their statements are different ways of describing that Object from different points of view. If we "take away any article from the 'form of sound words,'" we "diminish the idea of that which is the" proper "object of" devout "love, and thereby contract the range of" that love.[1] It is often said, "Our faith is not in dogmas, but in a Person:" this may be a covert way of disparaging dogmas, by setting them in a false contrast with Him of whom they speak; but the saying should at least remind us, that when we lay stress on orthodox language we must do so for His sake, in order to secure a right idea of Him; if not, our orthodoxy is, for religious purposes, dead. If it is to live, it must be built upon devotion to a living Redeemer.

(2) He is also the Foundation of all His ordinances. All the instrumental agencies whereby He works upon the soul—the means, as we call them, or channels of His grace—derive their efficacy from Him; nay, more, it is He who is the real though unseen Minister in them all, the true Celebrant, Baptizer, Absolver, Ordainer, the sovereign Priest of His Church, the

[1] Hussey, Academical Sermons, p. 251.

perpetual Holder of the keys, the real Agent in each Sacramental action.[1] Thus we gain the right point of view for estimating the importance of Sacraments, when we see in them His hand stretched forth; when, to us, they are "joints and bands" which unite the members to the Head of the body mystical. Nor can we be in danger of "setting the priest in the place of Christ," while we regard him simply as the organ and representative of his Lord.[2] What view of Church life can be more spiritual than this, which regards the ordinances as modes of Christ's operation, pervaded by the power and splendour of His inherent grace and truth?

(3) To conclude: if Christ be, in these ways, the Foundation of our spiritual life, in all its aspects, should He not be also the Foundation of all that we do? Human life must be active, if it is to be healthy; sloth has been not unreasonably classed among the capital sins, because a stagnation of affection and effort is a contradiction of the purposes of our being, is fraught with a moral malaria which the soul's vitality may be unable to resist. Here, then, in Christ, is a basis for all that a Christian finds to do. He will try to help others to appreciate the perfect

[1] See Pusey, Serm. ii. 245.
[2] See Liddon, Univ. Serm. ii. 200.

freedom of Christ's service; he will say—rather by his conduct than by express words—"We have found Him," or "Come and see One who has told me all that ever I did."[1] In all that he puts his hand unto, by way of doing what good he can in his own sphere, he will be consciously endeavouring to serve and please his Master, to do all things in Him and for Him. This is to build up practical life on the true Divine foundation; not to neglect or slight its present interests, but to hallow all activities by a single-hearted devotion to Him who said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day." While it is day! How long will it be day for each of us? "Our times are in the hands" that were pierced, and that are now held up in irresistible intercession. It is still "to-day" with us; we live now—can believe, pray, resolve, work, now. We have ready access to the sure Foundation; let us make good use of the inestimable opportunity. If the building-work has been neglected, if hindrances have been turned into excuses for inaction, if lower objects have absorbed our interests, or if some of the stones have been carelessly cemented, let us remind ourselves of the stirring words addressed by a prophet to the returned exiles: "Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled

[1] John i. 45; iv. 29.

houses, and let the house of the Lord lie waste?" Let us, too, "consider our ways," and resume the building of the spiritual house within us, being assured that the promise made to them will be abundantly verified for us: "Be strong and work, for I am with you."[1]

[1] Hagg. i. 4, 5; ii. 4.

SERMON XXVI.

SANCTIFYING THE LORD IN THE HEART.

"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."—1 Pet. iii. 15.

When the Spirit of God takes hold of a human character, He does not come to destroy, but to fulfil. The original elements are not annihilated, but refined, ennobled, and ultimately transfigured; and the man is still himself, individually distinct, the same in all the specialty of his temperament; the change that has passed over him has respected the type of his interior constitution. We see this with remarkable clearness in the Apostles who went together to the empty tomb of Christ. The "Son of thunder," whose zeal was on two occasions misdirected,[1] lives on, so to speak, in him who wrote "of the lake of fire," who forbade Christians to fraternise with those who "brought not the teaching of Christ;"[2] the fire still glows, but its flame has been steadied and purified. So, too, in the Acts and in his Epistles, the spokesman

[1] Luke ix. 49, 54. [2] Rev. xx. 10; 2 John 10.

and leader of the Twelve is not less ardent because he is no longer impulsive; the fervid enthusiasm for the Master has learned to express itself in calmer and graver tones, and is all the truer for having put on a sober strength. Formerly, when a trial came, it overtook him all at once; his imagination took in, as in one vivid flash of consciousness, all its painful or terrible aspects; and, as we know, he broke down. It is otherwise now; he is just as keenly sensitive about the sharp realities of a great trouble, but he has formed the habit of looking at it beforehand. It no longer finds him off his guard. He has drunk in and assimilated the full force of the well remembered words, "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." And so now he steadfastly and of set purpose holds up before the minds of his fellow Christians in Asia Minor,—who, as Christians, must remember that they are "sojourners" in this world,—the certainty of an impending persecution. He gives not the least encouragement to illusions as to the possibility of avoiding it; or rather, he drives them clean out of the field of vision. He even speaks of it in two passages as if already come, and twice, in these, describes it as a fiery trial.[1] He is thus quite alive

[1] 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; iv. 12.

to its intensity; he knows, and tells them, that it will severely tax their faith. He warns them not to deem it some "strange thing," which they had not bargained for; they are to be anxious about one thing only, that they suffer for being Christians, not for any actual misdeed. On this point the Apostle is emphatic; he goes into particulars, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, no, nor" even "as a meddler in other men's affairs."[1] He warns them against the temptation to repay the alien revilers in their own coin. He is anxious to leave no room for misconstruction. Let it be quite clear, whenever you come under censure of secular law, that it is purely and simply on account of your religion, as a religion which that law refuses to tolerate.[2] Let its officers "find no occasion against you," except the fact that you are not ashamed to confess Christ; and then take it as a matter of faith that nothing will really harm you while you are spending all your zeal and interest in what is good, and have no part or lot in what is evil. "If you are reproached for the name of Christ," still more, "if you actually suffer for righteousness' sake," you will there-

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 15.

[2] "Religio illicita." Roman law said to Christians as such, "Non licet esse vos," Tertull. Apol. 4; cp. Justin Mart. Apol. ii. 2.

by realise the beatitude of those who take some "part in Christ's own sufferings;" you will find in the name of Christian a fresh occasion for "glorifying God." But now let us observe how impressively the Apostle adopts the language of the prophet, who had to cheer up faithful souls in Judah against the time when the waters, as he expressed it, of "the great Assyrian river" were to spread like a flood over the land of the promised "Immanuel."[1] What would then be the only refuge? The truth of which Immanuel's name was the condensation; "With us is God." It is not for His servants to be scared by what terrifies the worldly-minded and unfaithful. They must not be shaken like trees under the wind; such fear is for a king and a people who are "wearying out" the forbearance of their God.[2] No, "fear not ye what this people fear. The Lord of Hosts, Him shall ye sanctify; let Him be the one object of your fear, let Him be your 'living Dread.'"[3] Yes, fear to offend Him, and fear nothing else; and then He will be to you for a place of shelter, a sanctuary where you can be safe and at rest, "hidden from the provoking of all men." This is the point, that the "one most holy and saving fear of His displeasure delivers us from all

[1] Isa. viii. 7, 8. [2] Isa. vii. 2, 13.
[3] Samson Agonistes.

base and earthly fear, from all other fear in the world."[1] This is why, in other places of Scripture, the fear of man is described as a snare, and worldly fearfulness as a sin, implying as it does that the fear of the Lord is absent.[2] The son of Sirach's "woe to fearful hearts" is reaffirmed in the Apocalypse, which places "the fearful" first in the list of the inevitably condemned.[3]

What is meant by "sanctifying the Lord"? The phrase occurs elsewhere in Isaiah: "They shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel;"[4] and in other books, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me;"[5] "Ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel;"[6] "The heathen shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes:"[7] we ought to understand this, for we daily pray to Our Father that His Name may be "hallowed" or sanctified. It is the simplest of truisms that God can receive no increase of holiness, least of all from those who must beg Him to forgive their sins; but to sanctify Him, or to hallow His Name, is to acknowledge Him, not merely in word, but habitually

[1] Dr. Arnold, Christian Life, ii. 227. [2] Prov. xxix. 25; Isa. li. 12.
[3] Ecclus. ii. 12; Rev. xxi. 8. [4] Isa. xxix. 23.
[5] Lev. x. 3. [6] Numb. xx. 12. [7] Ezek. xxxvi. 23.

and practically—in thought, in feeling, in aim, in conduct—as being what He is, the one supreme object of obedience, reverence, and devotion. They sanctify Him who give Him His due, who treat His claims as real and absolute, who look away from all other powers, from all imagined resources or grounds of confidence, to Him as the origin and centre of their existence, the One most high, most holy, and most lovable, and at the same time most "awful" in His "purity," with a reverential awe which leaves no room for lower fear, because it involves an adoring and loving trust. Well might St. Peter recall this ancient text, and add to it the significant gloss, "in your hearts." The Lord must be enthroned in the inmost recesses of our being; He must not, there or anywhere else, be insulted by the presence of a rival like that image which Ezekiel saw in his vision,[1] as "provoking to jealousy" by standing right in the way of the worshippers who entered the Lord's house. "I am the Lord, that is My Name, and My glory will I not give to another."[2] This is what He said of Himself in old times; this is what He says at all times, with the same emphasis, and never more distinctly and intelligibly than by the mouth of the Apostle of love, who sums up all his exhortations

[1] Ezek. viii. 3. [2] Isa. xlii. 8.

by bidding his dear children "guard themselves from idols." The thought is appropriate for a Dedication festival, which must always bring home to us the duty of consecrating ourselves. And this consecration must be unreserved and thoroughgoing. Let me use the words of one who knew well how to speak to hearts: "to sanctify the Lord in our hearts is to keep up, by every means in our power, a holy regard of Him; to look at Him ever with the downcast eyes of our soul; whatever other stirring or various thoughts" may "occupy the foreground of our mind, still to have His holy presence realised before us." Those who thus "fill themselves with the overflowing sense of His awfulness, His nearness, His care, His power, His holiness, His majesty, will find all earthly fears fade away and perish at His presence; this is the Apostle's rule, and panacea against human fears, to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts; so that, by being thus continually and sacredly present to our imaginations," or, let us say, to that faith which is "an evidence of what is invisible," "He may lift up, sanctify, and support even our poor, trembling, fearful spirits, in the worst days of earthly trial and suffering."[1]

[1] Cp. Bishop Moberly, Sermons at Winchester College, ii. 100, 106. He speaks further on of "this constant *genuflection* of thought," etc.

This, indeed, was the promise which uplifted the hearts of the Eleven, at any rate for the moment, when they had been warned of a coming trial of their constancy. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye will have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."[1] "In" Christ, as St. Paul loves to say,—and the phrase, as he uses it, overflows with tender trustfulness, with adoring exultant joy,—in Christ, their Head and Saviour, Christians are to live, as in a precinct safe and homelike, in a pure invigorating atmosphere. It is "in the Lord" that they are to become strong, to walk, to speak, exhort, or testify, to plan out their lives, to fulfil home duties.[2] And this brings us naturally to the consideration of St. Peter's own words in that other reading which is one of the gains, so to speak, of the Revised Version, and is now accepted by scholars as the true text: "Sanctify Christ in your hearts as Lord." How significant is the application to Christ, by His own "first" Apostle, of words which the prophet had used with reference to the Holy One of Israel! If Christ can be, and is to be, thus

[1] John xvi. 33.

[2] Eph. vi. 10; Col. ii. 6; 2 Cor. ii. 17; 1 Thess. iv. 1; Eph. iv. 17; 1 Cor. vii. 39; Eph. vi. 1.

sanctified, Christ must be literally Divine, One in being with the Most High; or else St. Peter is in effect exhorting us to break the first commandment. For, as we have seen, to "sanctify," in this Old Testament use, was to acknowledge God as the true object of a worship and service, of a constant religious awe, which could not without idolatry be rendered to any creature. Let us read the words in this form, and see briefly how the precept can be obeyed, and the consequent blessing secured, under three different forms of trial, taken as samples of the rest.

(1) St. Peter was thinking immediately of apprehended suffering, and this at the hands of men, unconsciously acting as the instruments of a Master who saw fit thus to "prove" the patience and fidelity of His servants. But a great deal of actual suffering, apprehended or really imminent, comes apart from such instrumentality, or, at any rate, is only indirectly connected with human wills. For instance, suppose we learn that a severe outbreak of disease, infectious and perilous to life, is to be looked for, that it is at the door, that it is among us. Should we be likely then to be scared, and, as people say, "upset," by the terror of such a prospect? or should we have faith enough to sanctify in our hearts, as Sovereign and Lord of all things, the Redeemer who healed sickness in others

and accepted crucifixion for Himself? Could we suppress unworthy agitations, adopt all reasonable precautions, and make daily acts of faith in the spirit of that Psalmist who knew what it was "to abide under the shadow of the Almighty," and "not to be afraid of pestilence or sickness"?[1] But again, we know that "very often our fears enormously exaggerate real evils," and "very often we are haunted by fears which are altogether imaginary."[2] Why not simply take the Lord at His own word, and put aside faithless "anxiety about the morrow"? As the "Imitation of Christ" says, "It is idle to be disturbed about things which perhaps will never really happen;"[3] if we "fret ourselves" thus, we shall be "moved to do evil;"[4] if we place ourselves confidingly in the hands of our mighty and loving Saviour, we sanctify Him in our hearts as Lord.

(2) Remember further, that the drama of spiritual life and death can be performed on a humble stage, under conditions devoid of any impressive brilliancy. "The eyes of the Lord," open alike for scrutiny and for sympathy, "are in every place," are scanning impartially every career. A youth, let us say, goes out from some quiet country home, into an area which

[1] Ps. xci. 1, 6. [2] Dale, Laws of Christ for Common Life, p. 159.
[3] Imit. Chr. iii. 30. [4] Ps. xxxvii. 8.

presents new tests to his moral and religious fidelity; the scene may be a college or a workshop, a mess-room or house of business,—it matters not; suppose he falls in with a bad set; suppose he is mercilessly laughed at if found to persevere in religious habits; suppose that he is accused of self-righteousness, or even of self-interest; suppose that, whether in rough or in polished phrase, the creed of his boyhood is called an obsolete delusion, fit only for those who are content to be tutored by the clergy; suppose that moral strictness is disparaged as "overdone," or even scouted as a conventional restraint, injurious to nature's rights, invented by a tyrannous respectability; is there nothing here like a fiery trial! Indeed, sometimes, the furnace-heat is sevenfold. How will he stand it? Will he yield, as many do yield, in fear of the public opinion of a society from which he cannot escape? Will he begin the downward course by "assuming a vice although he has it not," affecting an indifference to religion beyond what he really feels, and by degrees turning that dismal pretence into a reality? Suppose that, on the contrary, he retains that holy fear of God which means holy courage towards man; that he quietly persists in what he knows to be right, never silences or trifles with his conscience, clings steadfastly to his faith, is regular and earnest in his prayers,

makes use of all opportunities of Church worship and Holy Communion, ignores all evil example while avoiding all appearance of censoriousness, keeps himself, by God's grace, pure and temperate and upright; —perseveres, in short, in his duty, just "as he did aforetime:"[1] what will be said of him above? what will his Lord's judgment be? That, young as he is, he is playing the man; that he is responding to grace, and "witnessing a good confession;" that he is "sanctifying Christ in his heart as Lord." Here, indeed, is a "Well done" worth securing; "Him will I also confess before My Father and before His angels."

(3) And once more; when we are depressed and anxious as to the prospects of the Church and of the Faith—and such anxieties inevitably mingle even with the gladness of a Church festival like the present—when unbelief is increasingly aggressive, increasingly confident of speedy success; when prejudices against that truth of which the Church is the pillar and ground-work reappear in all their old force, unallayed by explanations or by conferences; when those who are working for Christian education are alarmed at the probability that many a school in the country will cease to be an instrument of the definite Christian faith; when missions appear to

[1] Dan. vi. 10.

cover but little ground in the vast fields of long-established heathenism; when large masses of European society seem possessed with a spirit of revolutionary lawlessness, which fears God as little as it regards man; then, perhaps, we come to appreciate the trial of faith and patience which evoked, in old days of multiform confusion and misery, the despairing question, "Is God still caring for men?"[1] then we begin to see how prophets could expostulate with the All-righteous, and psalmists ask "why He had cast off His people;"[2] then the problem appears too hard, the task too onerous, the promised success past hoping for. But the history of the Church may remind us, that as we certainly are "not better than our fathers," so we are not undergoing trials from which they were wholly exempt; that great teachers and high saints seemed often to be defeated by the "Time-spirit," were tempted to think their work a failure, to grow weary in well doing, in other words, to lose faith. But as they could and did fall back, so must we fall back, on the invincible conviction that the cause is God's after all. "Let the Most High look to it."[3] If a prophet, after his vision

[1] Salvian, de Gub. Dei, i. 5.
[2] Jer. xii. 1; Hab. i. 13; Ps. lxxiv. 1, etc.
[3] Cp. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 99.

of Chaldean invasion, could say, "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die;"[1] much more should Christians be able to fulfil the duty of relying absolutely on Christ. It is treason to be fearful for the kingdom of the Risen One; if we know Him at all, we know that He was slain and that He liveth,—that His "hand and counsel" have, in a true sense, "determined" the form, the scope, the extent of the hostility which He wills that kingdom to encounter; our business is simply to hold our post, be faithful in our day, and leave results to Him. If others, through failure of faith, give way to such alarms as He has forbidden, let us not "fear what they fear, nor be dismayed," but adopt that tone of lofty and loyal confidence with which the Eastern Church, in her solemn service on Lenten evenings, makes the words of Isaiah the basis of an anthem that seems to recall the spirit of martyrs and confessors in the days of Heathen persecution.[2] "We will not be afraid, nor will we be troubled, For God is with us. But we will sanctify the Lord our God, and He shall be our fear, For God is with us. And if I trust in Him, He will be to my sanctification, For God is with us. And I will

[1] Hab. i. 12.

[2] See Neale, Introd. to Hist. of Eastern Church, ii. 910.

trust in Him, and I shall be saved by Him, For God is with us. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, For God is with us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, For God is with us; Both now, and world without end, For God is with us," our Emmanuel, our never-failing all-sufficing Christ, whom we, by His help, will sanctify in our hearts and lives as Lord.

SERMON XXVII.

FIDELITY AND SYMPATHY UNITED IN TRUE TEACHERS.

"Speaking the truth in love."—Eph. iv. 15.

What are the instinctive feelings with which those who love this place[1] assemble to keep its annual College Festival?

Perhaps it will be asked in return, "What should we feel but pure and simple gladness? We are here for a few bright hours,—here, where, as an eloquent voice on a similar occasion reminded us, 'every stone of the church, every memory in our souls, wakes up all that is best in us;'[2] here, where on such a day the faces of old friends and fellow-students light up as their hearts go forth in brotherly greeting; here, where, if anywhere, the inward atmosphere may well be so entirely lustrous as not to admit the passing shadow of

[1] Cuddesdon.

[2] Holland, Creed and Character, p. 139.

a cloud like a man's hand. 'Carpe diem' is surely to the purpose at such a time; for once we may put aside all thoughts of trouble; all sorrows or disappointments, anxieties or fears, as to our own special work, as to the Church, as to the cause of religion in England, can wait until the morrow shall too inevitably call them back. Sufficient for our holiday is the happiness thereof; our duty is to rejoice, to 'thank God and take courage,' to find our 'strength' in a 'joy that is of the Lord.'"

It is well, indeed, for us if we can truly assimilate that cheering assurance of Ezra, that invigorating experience of St. Paul.[1] And if we can do so, we shall not, amid our rejoicing, altogether ignore the perils that call for devout courage, and the weakness out of which, and in which, is to be perfected a strength above our own. And further, a festival such as ours, which draws its deepest meaning from realities so majestic as the kingdom that is not of this world and the ministration that exceeds in glory, is nothing else, when rightly regarded, but a solemn elaborate act of faith. And faith has ever something to overcome; "the world," in St. John's sense,—a sense, we cannot doubt, derived from recollections of his Lord's own teaching,—or "sight," the sensible ex-

[1] Neh. viii. 10; Acts xxviii. 15.

perience which so often crowds out men's feebler perceptions of the invisible, and by which, as St. Paul reminds us, they must not "walk" who profess to be men of "faith."[1] How is it with ourselves at every Easter? We do not forget the terrible forces of evil which interfere, for the present, with the completeness of our Redeemer's victory; but we cannot say, "He is risen, Alleluia," without knowing that His cause is bound to win. True faith can afford to take note of hostile phenomena; instead of shirking them, or affecting not to see them, it looks straight at them, into them, beyond them, to Him who suffers them for a time to cross His purposes, but who can, when He sees good, so deal with them, that "the wrath of man shall be constrained to praise Him," and "out of the eater shall come forth meat."

My brethren, our festival will not be really dimmed by thus giving scope to a principle which underlies all spiritual success. Its gladness will be at once graver and more solid, if, for a brief space, we take this opportunity of dwelling on some few of the difficulties or temptations which beset the path of Christian teachers in the English Church of our own time. It will be all the more appropriate to do so on a day which recalls the memory of our first Arch-

[1] 2 Cor. v. 7.

bishop, under whose missionary activities that Church began her career.[1]

Many of us, no doubt, have lately been reading that volume on "the Oxford Movement" properly so called, which, alike in the exquisite grace of its style, in the depth and delicacy of its intellectual and spiritual insight, in the pathos and force with which it exhibits the moral intensity of a great religious enterprise, and the mistakes, the struggles, the agonizing partings, which gave to its later course so tragic an interest, is worthy to be the last gift of Dean Church to the cause which he loved so wisely and so well. He tells us that some of the elder Churchmen were wont to "avoid what was sensibly effective," to be "very stiff and uncompromising in their witness," to look for no answering "sympathies from without," to dislike the "stir and agitation" inseparable from such an appeal to the Church at large as began in the autumn of 1833.[2] This, clearly, was a survival of an old-fashioned esoteric orthodoxy, which was rather too apt to "enfold itself in its own virtue," and to assume that it was impossible, or hopeless, to go out into the highways, and

[1] St. Augustine of Canterbury died May 26, 605.

[2] Church, The Oxford Movement, p. 64. Cp. Isaac Williams's Autobiography (published afterwards), p. 54.

compel men, by varied forms of urgent persuasiveness, to enter into the precinct where the truth was guarded by a few. We of this time can hardly do justice to a conservatism so reserved and so austere. Events have taught us to appreciate more deeply the sacred comparison of the "instructed" Christian "scribe" to the "householder" who, as occasion requires it, "brings out of his storechamber things new as well as old."[1] The outlook before us has manifestly widened. We know more, at least we think oftener, of all those divers interior conditions, — the needs, capacities, aspirations, preconceptions,—which exist in souls for whom Christ died, and to whom He bids us offer the Faith. A few words in a book nearly fifty years old, which might well be read by all candidates for Holy Orders, may now have for us a special meaning: "Think what sin will be yours if you pervert God's truth,—what if you present it so as it cannot be loved."[2] Alas, we know what stones of stumbling have been set in the path of souls on their way to Him who is altogether lovable, by some unintentional perversions of His Gospel, which have raised the question whether He has a Gospel at all! We also feel the power of influences which are drawing men, as men, to each other, and putting a noble Christian

[1] Matt. xiii. 52. [2] W. E. Heygate, Probatio Clerica, p. 40.

gloss on the "Homo sum" of the Heathen poet; we long, perhaps impatiently, to remove all speculative difficulties; we not only admit, but eagerly assert, that the Faith, while unchangeable in itself, must speak to the men of this time, as of all times, "in their own tongue wherein they were born;" that it must, by a certain variety—of course, within certain limits—of exposition, explanation, or argument, convince them that it is no fossil of antiquated thought, but can deal with their own existing problems, and so make good the claim of Him on whom it rests to be the Christ of later as of earlier centuries, the inexhaustible Light that still, as formerly, can "lighten every man."

It is well, and more than well; it is meet and right, *æquum et salutare*. But we are weak creatures even when we take a duty in hand; we do not always take hold of it on both sides. We forget that a hasty simplifying is apt to lead to a worse complication than ever. Expansiveness is an idea of the present hour; but should it not be balanced by the idea of fidelity to a trust? If "the Bisley and Fairford school" were somewhat rigid, is it not conceivable that we may become too lax? "Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear;" "Guard that good thing which has been entrusted unto thee, turning away from the oppositions

of the knowledge falsely so called;"[1] have not such texts as these an errand for us? What has been boldly and well said of concessions to actual unbelief is applicable, in its own way, to others less far-reaching; "the only legitimate reason for meeting men on their own ground is the intention to persuade them to come over to ours,"[2] that is, when our own is ascertained. There is nothing more pleasant than to sympathize; but sympathy, excellent as a servant, is not so excellent as a master. In things which concern revealed truth, it must be controlled and guided, and so kept really healthful, by a loyalty which, looking up to the Giver of truth, will steadily refuse to pare down His gift, to explain away this part of it, to keep back that other part as unwelcome to the "Time-spirit," and in that sense to "please men" without observing St. Paul's condition, "for their good, and so as to edify."[3] Of course, the question whether this or that view or statement is essential to a particular doctrine, and therefore to be stood by at all costs, must in each case be decided according to proper evidence; but the judgment may be considerably affected by a habit of asking first, in all cases, whether the view or statement is likely to give

[1] Ezek. ii. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 14.
[2] Dale, Lectures on Preaching, p. 198. [3] Rom. xv. 2.

offence, and so of assuming insensibly that, if it is, it is probably a distortion of the doctrine, and therefore ought to be readily laid aside.

(1) St. Paul once said that "if he were seeking to please men,"—were mainly bent on making his teaching attractive,—"he would not be a servant of Christ."[1] He knew that he must be that before all things, must preach the true Gospel and no other, must give to men just what he had received of the Lord; "woe to him" if he did otherwise. He had sometimes to defend his own Apostolic authority against those who called him a self-seeking pretender, one who aimed at power over souls for its own sake, and, in order to secure it, would resort by turns to imperiousness or to subtlety.[2] And charges not so very different are sometimes made against those whose claim to minister for Christ comes not, like his, from an immediate heavenly call, but through a long series of human ordainers; and they may be afraid to "magnify their office" when that claim, as soon as heard, is rejected on the ground of its "exclusiveness." They may thus be tempted to acquiesce in lower estimates of their vocation than those which are involved in the Church doctrine of Holy Order; to trace it to a supposed original act of the Christian

[1] Gal. i. 10. [2] 2 Cor. x. 10; xii. 16.

body as appointing, for its own convenience, a committee of office-bearers; or, far worse, to sink the spiritual character of the Ministry in its social or temporal accidents, as if it were enough for an "established" clergy to be functionaries of the nation in the highest aspects of its life. Such views may be in accordance with a theory of spiritual democracy, or with the crude Erastianism ingrained in the English mind, or with schemes for merging religion in philanthropy, or, if one may say it, with that affectation of secular fashions which some of the clergy appear to regard as a defence against the reproach of being "too clerical." But they are surely in flagrant contradiction to the idea of the Ministry as set forth in the Acts and in the Epistles, to our Lord's own words when He breathed upon His Apostles, and to His previous description of the function of His "stewards" as "set by Himself over His household, to give them their portion of" spiritual "meat;"[1] commissioned, that is to say, not from below, but from above,—not by the Christian people, but by Christ for their benefit, for the dispensation of that "grace and truth" which come by Him from the Father.[2] "Sacerdotalism" is a word that must not scare us; it may be,

[1] Luke xii. 42.

[2] Gore, The Ministry of the Church, pp. 10, 70 ff., 271.

as the founder of Cuddesdon College more than once said,[1] a stone flung at one of the "great verities of the kingdom of grace;" or, if it indicates a serious misapprehension of a Church principle, our business will be to exhibit the ministerial priesthood as the instrument, on the one hand, of the Great High Priest in the bestowal of certain definite gifts; on the other hand, of the Church as a body, in the exercise of her collective priestly right to "enter the Holiest" with reasonable sacrifice.

(2) And similarly, we must give no place to that unconscious rationalism which undervalues the Sacramental ordinances on the ground that spiritual blessings are not to be sought through physical media. When good Christians speak thus, they have forgotten that such a premiss will cut deeper,—even at the principle of our dependence on the Holy Incarnation. We have to show men, also, what has lately been well expressed by one who made trial for a time of a non-sacramental version of Christianity, that since the New Testament religion is "essentially spiritual," the place which Sacraments hold in it is a proof that they are "not mere forms" to be observed "because they have been commanded, but appointed channels through which God pleases to convey His

[1] Life of Bishop Wilberforce, iii. 30, 233.

grace to His people."[1] Here, again, we must help men to see why we make much of the Christian ordinances, by pointing to Christ Himself as the true efficient cause of those benefits which He thus instrumentally conveys to worthy recipients,—the never-failing "principal Agent"[2] in the means of grace which are so many "points of contact"[3] with His Person.

(3) In all this we have to guard, as is so often the case with us, against a false antithesis; in Christ, and therefore in the Church, the external is not contrary to the spiritual, but rather is transfigured, taken up into the spiritual, and made to subserve its august purpose. That "glory of the Only-begotten," which was enshrined in the flesh of Jesus Christ, is seen by faith as shining through the acts of His earthly ministry,—above all through His literal corporeal resurrection,—as now through all His institutions, ministerial and sacramental alike. The historical Christ is the spiritual life-giving Christ; and St. John's test of Christian "life," to "have" the Son of God, to be "in" Him, must be taken with his test of Christian belief, or rather,

[1] W. S. Heathcote, My Salvation Army Experience, p. 67.
[2] A phrase applied to God in S. Tho. Aq. Sum. iii. 62. 1.
[3] Liddon, Easter Sermons, ii. 112.

let us say, of union with God's Spirit,—to "confess Jesus Christ as come in flesh."[1] The "Son" is the Son as incarnate; and here we may observe that an excessive reaction from that dry and one-sided view of the evidence from His miracles which isolated them from His teaching and His character, has led some to forget that for those who could not at once accept Him for His own sake, and take Him simply at His own word,[2] He did lay stress on those "signs" which He called "works done in the name of His Father;" and that if we disparage them, or "draw a veil over them,"[3] we so far derogate from His own authority when speaking in reference to His office as the Christ; even as, if we resolve predictive prophecy into the "forecast" of signally gifted souls, we shall be disabled from maintaining the infallibility of Christ as Teacher, and may find ourselves on a slope at the base of which is a residuum of Christianity, with the supernatural life crushed out of it.

(4) Again, a warning has lately come from one of the chairs of our Episcopate,—a warning all the more impressive, as representing an eminent teacher's long experience,—to the effect that in their eagerness to protest against ways of speaking about the Atone-

[1] 1 John v. 12, 20; iv. 2. [2] John x. 38.
[3] Wace, The Gospel and its Witnesses, p. 97.

ment which are "not only unscriptural but repulsive, men have been betrayed into casting away what is real, vital, and essential."[1] In other words, they have practically reduced the efficacy of our Redeemer's death to the subjective effect of a supreme effort of sympathy, whereby one Himself sinless could profoundly feel for the misery of sinners, could grieve over and repudiate their sin, and win them back to repentance and peace by the impressiveness of an unparalleled self-devotion. But this would keep Him still "at a distance" from us; He would not have "borne our sins," He would only have sadly pointed to them: He would not have entered into that "relation to God" in which they had "involved" us,[2]—He would only have persuaded *us* to cancel it, to make our own "atonement" by simply abandoning them. And how could such a theory account for the language of Scripture, with its manifold abundance of images and statements, all tending to form one idea,—the idea of an actual barrier established by sin between man and the free outflow of Divine mercy, and removed by the intrinsic virtue of a Divine act,—the acceptance of death by the Incarnate Son of God, in accordance with that φιλανθρωπία of

[1] Bishop Ellicott, Salutary Doctrine, p. 75.
[2] Dale, The Atonement, p. 424.

the Father, which was shown in giving Him "to be a propitiation for our sins"? For He who was thus given, who thus gave Himself, had been God from all eternity, from, and in, and with the Father. His Godhead could impart a Divine efficacy to all that He did or suffered in His manhood, and a Divine significance to that headship over our race, which made Him its sole competent representative. But, in so representing us, He could, in the fullest sense, stand for us. By submitting to a Passion which was spiritual as well as physical, which included the agony of the Sin-bearer and the tremendous experience of the Forsaken, He, the Man who ceased not to be God, upheld, with unique transcendent emphasis, the eternal law of righteousness against sin; "the principle that we, sinners, deserved to suffer, being asserted in His sufferings, that it might not have to be asserted in ours."[1] In this sense, He "gave Himself a ransom for many," and our sins were in effect laid upon Him; He could take them away on our behalf, because, as the Lamb of God, He had borne their burden, had endured the chastisement of our peace. "Vicarious,"—"substitution,"—"satisfaction,"—we must not give up the use of these terms in a sense which is neither immoral nor

[1] Dale, The Atonement, p. 433.

arbitrary, but consonant to our Saviour's office as Second Adam, and involved in the very perfection of His own miraculous love; and thus we may take with us to the throne of grace that plea which St. Anselm recommends to Christian penitents, "My God, I interpose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my sins and Thy displeasure." And if, as Mozley has said,[1] we are in a region of "vistas and fragments" when we think of Divine "justice, mercy, and mediation as a reason of mercy," the vista thus opened beyond Calvary, to the eye of a soul that feels what sin is, will but shed fuller and fuller light on the moral perfections of the Supreme.

(5) And finally, to ascend yet further back: there is no small risk of evacuating the truth which we indicate by the phrase "Hypostatic Union," while we are occupied with the kindred truth of our Lord's complete and veritable Manhood. This latter truth ought to be held fast, against all attempts to ignore what it involves; it is unspeakably, incalculably precious, for on it, as has been well said, depends "the whole doctrine of the Second Adam, the value of the atoning Sacrifice, the meaning of the Ascension,"[2] the virtue of the Intercession. But the

[1] Mozley, University Sermons, p. 200.
[2] Gore, Leo the Great, p. 57.

Apollinarian and Eutychian theories are not congenial to our modern habits of thought; the danger practically lies in the opposite quarter. A quasi-Nestorian evasion of the Incarnation-mystery is to many minds at present more ensnaring. Bishop Westcott, some years ago, warned us against a Cerinthian separation of the Son of Man from the Son of God;[1] and there is every reason to fear that an unformulated but virtual Humanitarianism is involved in some popular but untheological language, which owns Jesus as "divine" in a clearly unreal sense. People may think they are contending for a truly human Christ, while what they are making for is a purely human Christ; and we cannot be too careful when we speak of that κένωσις, whereby the Son of God, in taking the "form of a servant," accepted, as a consequence, limitations[2] within the sphere of His humanity,—limitations purely self-imposed, affecting His human life, will, activity, and thought, but not involving aught that could compromise the perfect adhesion of His immaculate soul to the sovereign Good; while at the same time He retained, as God, His Divine life, will,

[1] The Epistles of St. John, p. xxxvi.

[2] Compare the Cyrilline phrase, τὰ μέτρα τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος or τῆς κενώσεως. Expl. Cap. 10: adv. Nest. iv. 3; cp. adv. Theod. 10.

and energy, simply because He could not cease to be a Divine Person when He waived, in regard merely to His human existence, the full exercise of Divine powers, the full enjoyment of the "riches" of His glory.[1] He did not insist on retaining, as man, His Divine coequality with the Father; in becoming man, He assumed a finite nature; His body, as a rule, obeyed the ordinary laws of corporeal existence; His human knowledge grew by stages, and even in His ministry it was not all-comprehensive;[2] although,

[1] An actual surrender of Divine prerogatives or perfections by a Divine Person is unthinkable. It would involve the idea of an otiose ineffective divinity, which would be incompatible with a true Theism. It could not be illustrated by the self-adaptation of a teacher to the capacities of the pupil; for the teacher retains, all along, his own superior knowledge. Still less, if possible, could the "giving up" of the Son by the Father be adduced in support of it: for the Father did not thereby surrender His relation to the Son; and the Son, even during His earthly life, was continuously with and "in" the Father, and conscious of His unique eternal Sonship. However we translate ἐκένωσε, we are constrained alike by the construction, by the context, and by the general New Testament doctrine of Christ's Divinity, to restrict the idea of the word to His existence in "the form of a servant," under the conditions of His earthly self-humiliation. To be quite explicit, let it be added (in words better than my own) that our Lord's "self-limitation" consisted in a habitual "exercise of self-restraint as to the use of divine powers through the humanity which He had assumed," a habitual "fulfilment of the conditions under which He had resolved to do His work" as Son of man.

[2] Mark xiii. 32 (and Matt. xxiv. 36 in R.V.). There is no need to take the questions in Mark v. 30 or John xi. 34 as merely "economic," or to treat Luke ii. 52 as referring to an experimental verification of

when He willed, His face could "shine as the sun," and whenever He taught, explicitly or implicitly, His mind was flooded with the fulness of Divine light. At the lowest points of His self-humiliation, in the stable, in the garden, on the Cross, He was always Himself, possessing still, as God, the "form" or essential character of Deity. It is, I believe, on that side of the great doctrine which secures the permanence of His Godhead in the Incarnate, as involved in His undivided eternal personality, that we specially need to hold the balance true. If, while remembering Leo and Chalcedon, we forget Cyril and Ephesus, or rather, if we do not bear in mind that Chalcedon re-affirmed the teaching of Ephesus,[1]

knowledge already possessed by our Lord's human mind in His boyhood. We are not called upon to affirm that all facts cognisable by any human mind were actually present to His throughout the days of His flesh; but we are called upon to observe the clear distinction between matters on which He did not pronounce, and matters on which He did, and not to assume that His silence about the former can prove Him to have been fallible as to the latter. Of course, the question, "On what points did He pronounce?" would involve a discussion of the several passages concerned.

[1] "One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged as in two natures without confusion, or change, or division, or separation. . . . Not as if parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son," etc. Defin. Fid. Chalced. Compare the acclamation at Chalcedon, "Leo and Cyril taught alike;" and the repeated assertions that Leo's Tome was in harmony with Cyril's teaching. Mansi, vi. 972; vii. 12 ff.

we may come to take up with a strangely reversed form of the very heresy condemned at Chalcedon, as if, during His life on earth, our Saviour's Deity had been absorbed into His manhood. The deep practical importance of the truth for which Cyril contended may be brought home to modern Christians by reminding them that Christ, as the Eternal Word, the Author of life to all men, has been able—(I am borrowing from an invaluable essay on "Our Lord's Human Example")[1]—to take our human nature into union with His own Divine self, "to quicken it with new fertilities of life, and to impart it, as a common principle of restoration, to the whole race of redeemed man."

Other instances of a "minimising" tendency, arising out of a sincere but unregulated wish to make the Christian Creed more acceptable, will occur to us, and perhaps will make us think it hard to reconcile the claims of sympathy with those of strict doctrinal fidelity; and yet these claims were harmonized by him who could "become all things to all men," yet never "shrank from declaring God's whole counsel," and by him who could employ Alexandrian terms to commend the faith to cultured outsiders, but who affirmed that to think of "advanc-

[1] Church Quarterly Review, xvi. 296.

ing beyond" that faith was to lose both the Father and the Son.[1] Yes, and what is the concern of apostle or saint for inquirers or doubters, compared with the incalculable tenderness that yearns over them in the heart of the Good Shepherd? and He, when many of His disciples called His sayings too "hard," and went back and walked no more with Him, could not unsay His own words, could but turn to His interior circle and ask, "Have you also a mind to go away?"

My brethren, let us first be loyal to our Master, and He will make us tender, considerate, equitable to our fellow-servants; perhaps will help us to "say a word in season to those who are weary"[2] of searching for the Light, to stretch out a helpful hand to those whose feet are stumbling on the dark mountains. Let us take up those words towards the close of a great hymn, composed by the chief of scholastic theologians, himself a preacher whose deep fervour could move hearts:—[3]

"Bone Pastor, Panis vere,
Jesu, nostri miserere;
Tu nos pasce, nos tuere,
Tu nos bona fac videre
In terra viventium,—
Tu qui cuncta scis et vales!"

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[1] 2 John 9, with the reading *προάγων*. Cp. Westcott in loc.
[2] Isa. l. 4. [3] See Alban Butler, Lives of the Saints, March 7.

Truly He knows all things, and can do all things; He understands, as we do not, the difficulties which we would fain relieve; and He knows us, too, as we do not know ourselves,—our tendencies, in this or that point, to "the falsehood of extremes," our clumsiness in handling so fine an instrument as His word, and the manifold sins which make us so unfit to teach any one in His Name. Let us beg Him to lead all wanderers to Himself, by "a straight way wherein they shall not stumble;"[1] and for ourselves, and for all whom he has made spokesmen of His truth, let us implore the power to respond to His intentions, to speak that truth alike faithfully and in love.

[1] Jer. xxxi. 9.

SERMON XXVIII.

PERSEVERANCE.

"Whose spirit was not steadfast with God."—Ps. lxxviii. 8.

This is the longest of the three great Historical Psalms. Like the 105th and 106th, it takes a large survey of a large portion of Israelitish history; it has a special affinity to the 106th, in that it dwells with unsparing plainness on the national sins exhibited in that history: but its ethical purpose is more distinctly indicated,—it does not begin with "O give thanks," but with "Give ear, O my people, to my law." The psalmist is a preacher of righteousness, who draws lessons from the past as safeguards for the future: his theme is the perversity of the forefathers, considered as a warning to their descendants. "Do not," he urges, "reproduce the sins which are recorded for your admonition. Our fathers were repeatedly stubborn and disobedient, insensible to the true import of a Divine presence, unresponsive to the touch of a Divine training. They were always

falling back from the ground which they had been strengthened to occupy: when fully armed, they turned aside from the appointed struggle: they forgot what God had done for them, they doubted as to what He could do." Their murmurings are thrice described by the old significant phrase which had given the name of Massah to the place where the rock was smitten: "They tempted God;" as in the *Venite*, "Your fathers tempted Me, put Me to the proof," by faithlessly demanding a sign. The Psalmist recalls especially the scenes of "the place of burning," and "the graves of those who lusted:" he goes on to the wild times which followed the entrance into Canaan, to the abandonment of the Shiloh-sanctuary, to the rejection of self-willed Ephraim. And one particular point in the sad chronicle is at least twice emphasized: even when Israel had seemed to promise amendment, to "inquire after God," to "remember that He was their rock," still these professions of repentant loyalty had no stuff in them: because the people were "not steadfast in His covenant," and this because "they set not their heart aright, their spirit was not steadfast with Him."

Here is the root of the evil—a habitual instability in regard to good resolutions. It is a topic on which

prophets and psalmists, and sacred historians too, are constantly enlarging; their language might seem to be but an expansion of the mournful judgment pronounced by the dying patriarch on that firstborn son who had more than once given proof of a generous and sympathetic nature: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel,"[1] shalt not have the first place. All along the line of Jewish history, this fatal tendency to moral incoherence, this hankering after fleshpots and idols, this want of fibre in the piety of the moment, illustrates the text before us, and helps us to understand the difficulties of those who strove in God's behalf to keep Israel up to the standard of religious loyalty. But if we would learn from those faithful records, we must not waste our "loathing on dead men's crimes."[2] Rather let us take home the evidence borne by these ancient books to the permanence in human nature of certain weak points, of certain types of moral evil. Hosea, who is such a living teacher on this subject, who tells us so much about hypocritical inconsistency, about a craving for sinful excitements, about the unreality of a religion of mere emotions, has given us in a few words a vivid picture of this want of steadfastness as attaching

[1] Gen. xlix. 4.

[2] Christian Year, Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

both to Ephraim and to Judah: their "goodness is but a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."[8] Yes,—but what of ours?

It is simply a truism to say that, quite apart from the authority of Revelation, this one great flaw must be deemed fatal to true manhood. Our own popular language assumes the truth of such a judgment. We hear persons saying, "So-and-so is in many respects attractive: one cannot help liking him, one must needs appreciate his good points: but he is not steady,—he has no fixedness of purpose,—he is this or that as the mood takes him, as A or B has the last word with him: what is best in him depends on impulse rather than on principle." Lives are oftener shipwrecked by mere facility of acquiescence in evil than by a deliberate high-handed choice of it. In a famous story, the so-called hero, whose name is meant to suggest a wavering character, exclaims in sad self-reproach, "O, indolence and indecision of mind! if not in yourselves vices, to how much exquisite misery do you frequently prepare the way!" But are they not vices when a moral issue is at stake? What do we think of the king of Judah who did well enough while carefully tutored by the priest who had crowned him in his childhood,

[8] Hos. vi. 4.

but, when left to himself, hearkened to the princes whose obsequiousness allured him into apostasy?[1] When Pilate, after determining to release the Man in whom he had "found no fault," gave way before the stiffer resolution expressed in "Thou art not Cæsar's friend," he doubtless fell below the high Roman standard. Heathenism itself, in its higher moods, had a true perception of justice as involving a "tenacity of purpose,"[2] of virtue as consisting "not only in the choice of goodness for its own sake, but also in a firm unflinching pursuance of good action."[3] And as nature is not abolished, but adopted and perfected, by grace, her teaching repeats itself with a new and solemn emphasis in the stress laid by Scriptural ethics on what may be called, in a word, perseverance; as when St. Barnabas could exhort the Antiochene believers to "cleave to the Lord with the purpose of their heart;"[4] when St. Paul borrows imagery for the enforcement of this high duty of steadfastness from a root, from a fixed seat, from a foundation;[5] when St. James exhorts us to "stablish our hearts;"[6] when St. Peter assures us that the way to "resist the devil" is to be "steadfast in the

[1] 2 Kings xii. 2; 2 Chron. xxiv. 17. [2] Hor. Carm. iii. 3. 1.
[3] Arist. Eth. ii. 4. 3. [4] Acts xi. 23.
[5] Eph. iii. 18; Col. i. 23; ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 58. [6] James v. 8.

faith," and that it belongs to "the God of all grace to stablish, strengthen, and settle those whom He has called in Christ to His glory;"[1] when St. John, as if echoing the last lessons of his Master, exhorts his dear children to "abide in Him," and transmits to a Church which "has kept His word" that heart-uplifting exhortation, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."[2] The faith of Christ, carried out into action, is the true steadying principle for characters which have elements of weakness. It has often reproduced the experience of that shrinking, sensitive prophet who was fashioned into a strong "fenced wall;"[3] has repeatedly proved itself able to brace up the quivering nerves of the soul, and change vacillation into a stability which can affect the whole inward being, as wrought up to spiritual manhood in Christ: the intellect, the affections, and the will can all be stayed upon Him, the Rock of Ages, whose presence is the one true prop of the soul.

1. What a blessing it must be to have the mind in all its activities thus secured against uncertainties by leaning on the sovereign Truth, the reality of all realities, the one Being worthy of absolute affiance: to have so clear a sense of His presence, of His actual

[1] 1 Pet. v. 9, 10. [2] 1 John ii. 28; Rev. iii. 11. [3] Jer. xv. 20.

concern for us, of the sacred facts which He has revealed, as to take them for the bases and landmarks of our thought; to try all questions by that test; to know at once what to say of all theories or systems which are incompatible with those root-truths! Then, indeed, will the profession, "I believe in God the Father, and in His only-begotten Son, and in His Holy Spirit," become the very reverse of a dry formula; it will be full of spirit and life; it will save us from being carried away with every blast of vain doctrine; we shall know where we stand, and in whom is our trust.

2. And what a comfort it would be to have the affections rested on the All-good, the One altogether lovable! "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:" so could a psalmist write: and a holy Scottish bishop might well exclaim by way of comment, "O that happy word, worthy to be twice repeated, when shall we say it?"[1] Those deep inexhaustible capacities of desiring and of loving, how often are they frittered away on things which cannot profit! What if we could get them set in order, harmonized, consolidated, enriched, by contact with Him whose chosen name is Love, who alone can give them a really worthy aim, and fill them with an imperishable vitality?

[1] Archbishop Leighton.

Then, instead of finding that our love for friends or kinsfolk was weakened, we should learn that to love all in God, and God above all, was the only way to perpetuate those pure ties which make up the chief happiness of this life, and to secure for them a strength and a sweetness which the world can neither give nor take away.

3. Once again, our consciousness of so many failures must surely make us long to have our wills fortified by union with the all-holy Will. How is it with us now? Do we not know what it is to have good feelings stirred, perhaps by what we call a "hearty service," perhaps by a devout Communion, and then to find, two or three days later, that they have sunk down again into the languor or the torpor from which we thought they had been effectually aroused? Is not our spiritual life, too often, a thing of fits and starts—a thing, as we say, without backbone, drifting this way and that, a moral type of whatever in nature is most fleeting? Do we not feel pierced with a humiliating sense of contrast, when we read the lives of saints, all glorious with a "fixedness of heart," a true stability of conviction and of will; or when we refer to our own experience of what has been wrought by grace, and, under grace, by responsiveness, for souls whose names will figure in no

calendar, but whose careers might be summarised as verifying the inspiriting affirmation, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;" "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger?"[1]

What others do, or have done, is possible, at least in some good measure, for us. If we desire to attain it, our first step should be to examine the causes of previous failure. Perhaps our resolutions have been made superficially, as the product of a transitory excitement, which has but played upon the surface of our souls: it is like the case of the seed that fell on rocky ground, where it had no depth of earth, and could take no root, so that its rapid appearance of growth was all delusive. Or they have been made in blind self-confidence: "I know my own mind, and I shall stick to it; I am not as other men are, contemptibly weak, incapable of a manful determination." Those who say this "think they stand." The Apostle, who knew men so thoroughly, would bid them "take heed lest they fall."[2] Or again, we have put our resolves into a form too general, forgetting that vagueness in such matters means defeat: "I will turn over a new leaf; I will be a more earnest Christian." Yes, but how? in what points? The essence of improvement lies in watchfulness over

[1] Isa. xl. 31; Job xvii. 9. [2] 1 Cor. x. 12.

particulars: "I will avoid this set of thoughts, this kind of talking, this or that fault of omission or commission." Or, once more, we sometimes think, if we do not formulate the idea, that the keeping of a good resolution concerns our own self-respect; and over self-respect the drift of our wishes can exert a subtle power; it can make us accept a lowered ideal, and be content with what we find convenient in the way of effort, as if we had only ourselves to satisfy. We forget that a good resolution is made in God's presence, that it involves a covenant with Him, that He has recorded it, that He is an observant judge of our conduct in regard to it, that it will confront us, one day, at His tribunal.

But from this fact we can derive encouragement, if we honestly desire to be more steadfast in time to come. It has been well said that "true stability of heart is stayed in the grace and in the contemplation of Almighty God."[1] We cannot develop it from our own resources; we can only obtain it by communion with, by self-surrender to, that Holiness in which there is "no variableness," that Love whose title is "I am." The first requirement is sincerity of intention, which the Psalmist calls rightness of heart, the opposite to which our Lord brands as hypocrisy.

[1] Newman, Univ. Serm., p. 94.

Then, let us take pains to keep up any existing good habit; let us strive not to grow slack and limp in regard to duties which so closely affect character. And here the principle of fidelity in what is little may help us to be faithful in what is much: regularity and punctuality in keeping our secular engagements and transacting our daily business may, by God's mercy, become a training for the more exact discharge of spiritual obligations. And in that higher domain of action, we shall gain more steadfastness by diligence in our prayers; by the faithful use of all the means of grace; by vigilance over thoughts and imaginations which otherwise might tend to moral enfeeblement, to a relaxation of the interior tone, to a substitution of dreaminess for effort; by a serious consideration of the wholeness, the solidarity, of our spiritual life, in regard to belief, devotion, conduct, and, withal, of the need for concentrated activity in these various but correlated lines. One more condition is indispensable—a resolute avoidance of whatever, in times past, has made us weary of welldoing, has inclined us to look back wistfully on what we have deliberately renounced, which is, in the end, to "shrink back unto perdition."[1]

These conditions presupposed, let no one despond

[1] Heb. x. 39.

on the score of past inconsistencies, as if he had proved himself incapable of becoming steadfast. There is a wonderful encouragement in the fact that he who, as a young man, having gone a certain way with Paul and Barnabas, turned back when perils looked him in the face, is the same whom Paul, fourteen years afterwards, could reckon among his fellow-labourers, and of whom, later still, he could say with emphasis, "Bring him with thee, for he is serviceable unto me."[1] Mark had gained the firmness that he had wanted. Out of weakness he had been made strong. And the Lord's hand is not shortened; He can still give power to the weak—a "little strength," perhaps, at first, and then more, and yet more, until those who were once as reeds shaken by the wind shall be fixed as pillars in the "temple of God."[2] Let the assurance of His goodwill, which never fails or slackens through the ages, be to us a sufficient guarantee of the possibility—or rather, the certainty, if we will but believe and act upon it—of an inward invigoration which shall "fix our hearts," enable us to be faithful to our promises, preserve us from disappointing our Lord's intentions, and carry us on by a completed perseverance to that eternal fixedness in good, which is of itself eternal felicity.

[1] Col. iv. 10, 11; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11. [2] Rev. iii. 12.

Perseverance, then, is what we have to aim at; and let our encouragement be found in that profoundly consoling word of the Psalmist, "The Lord will make good, will perfect, will complete that which concerneth me;"[1] that which is involved in my true welfare, the due ordering of my life, the provision of a sufficing object for my affections and activities, the deliverance of my soul from moral corruption. For that text is translated into Christian language by the Apostle when he says, "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."[2] Let us hold fast our faith in the moral ideal of Christianity; let us remember that its early advocates[3] did really point to conspicuous moral conversions, to lives which, in plain matter of fact, had been cleansed and sweetened and rectified, and made into evidences of the Gospel which they "adorned." The Lord had begun, after all, to perfect what most concerned humanity. True it is that even St. Paul would not call himself "already perfect;"[4] true also, as St. Augustine says, that the highest virtue of the saints in this life comes far short of that completed "love for God" which will be possible hereafter,—that all

[1] Ps. cxxxviii. 8.
[2] Phil. i. 6.
[3] Cp. Just. Mart. Apol. i. 14.
[4] Phil. iii. 12.

present sanctification is but a foretaste of the holiness yet to be.[1] But then it *is* a foretaste, an instalment: that is what St. Paul had ever in view, what helped him to press forward. God will perfect His work in us, if we will cooperate with Him; for we must do our part, must correspond to His merciful intentions, must conform our will to His will, must cherish and use His grace; and then, if we do but persevere in this one pathway of safety, He will help us to do better and be better, to gain more and more power against sin, to be firmer in faith, clearer in hope, warmer in charity, until, when the course is run and the trial safely ended, all that most deeply concerns our truest life shall be perfected in Him, who made us capable of enjoying Him for ever, and whose grace will have carried us on from strength to strength, to appear at last before Him in the true Sion, and to say with an awful wonder of joy, "Then I saw through a glass darkly, but now face to face."

[1] De Spiritu et Littera, 64; de Perfect. Just. c. 8.

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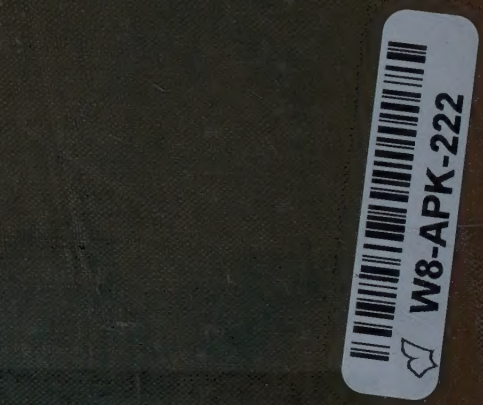

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